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Sir Richard Brooke, Bar.

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T H E
MICROCOSM,

A PERIODICAL WORK,

B Y

GREGORY GRIFFIN,

Of the COLLEGE of ETON.

Inscribed to the Rev. Dr. DAVIES.

I N T W O V O L U M E S.

V O L. I.

T H E T H I R D E D I T I O N.

Quid vetat et nosmet.--HOR.

W I N D S O R :

PUBLISHED FOR C. KNIGHT, CASTLE-STREET;
AND SOLD BY MESS. ROBINSONS, PATER-
NOSTER-ROW; AND MR. DEBRETT;
PICCADILLY, LONDON.

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T H E

MICROCOSM.

MONDAY, *November 6,* 1786.

*Protinus Italiam concepit, et arma virumque,
Qui modo vix culicem fleverat ore rudi.*—MARTIAL.

*HE, who a gnat had wept with artless tongue,
“ARMS AND THE MAN” in loftier numbers sung.*

 T has often been observed, that an introduction is the part of a work the most embarrassing to the Author, as well as the least entertaining to the Reader. I have frequently wished that Custom, or a literary etiquette, had prescribed some form so general, as to preclude the idea of plagiarism, while it secured

Vol. I. B cured

cured the Author from the apprehension of misrepresenting himself to the world; as for instance,

T O

THE MOST HIGH AND PUISSANT CRITICS,
BY THE SUFFERANCE OF THEIR SUBJECTS,
OF WIT, POETRY, AND HUMOUR, KINGS,
DEFENDERS OF TASTE,
THE MICROCOSMOPOLITAN SENDS GREETING,
&c. &c. &c.

Next to this, the method almost universally adopted by periodical writers, of usurping a feigned name and character, is perhaps the most eligible; the dignity of the Author is not diminished by the egotisms of Isaac Bickerstaff, and the Man with the short face reflects no portion of the ridiculous in his character on Steele or Addison.

Thus then I, GREGORY GRIFFIN, sally forth in this *our* lesser world, to pluck up by the roots the more trifling follies, and cherish the opening buds of rising merit.

It is the duty of a prudent General, before he hazards an engagement, to secure a safe retreat;
why

why should a similar conduct be less defensible in an Author? And now a conjecture there is, very likely to have arisen in the minds of my readers, and which they will wonder I have not answered before; namely, who I AM; Now as nothing is more painful than an ungratified desire of knowledge, I would advise my Readers to repress and smother in its infancy this unhappy passion of inquisitiveness; as, whatever be the success of this my work, such precautions have been taken with regard to myself, as shall elude all the efforts of enquiry, and baffle all the arts of Curiosity. Suffice it, that I boast with them of "*sucking the milk of Science*" from our Mother Eton, under the auspices of its present Director; to whom, (should this work ever be deemed worthy of so distinguished a Patronage) I would wish to presume to look up for countenance and protection. But to proceed in the explanation of my design. As this attempt may have raised some degree of curiosity within the circle to which it is address'd, as it is in itself new and unprecedented in the annals of Eton, I think it incumbent on me, before I proceed any farther, to give an ample account of its scope and design; that the reader may be fully acquainted with the nature of the amusement or

instruction he may expect to find; and that I may obviate any objections, which I foresee will arise to this undertaking. These I shall rank under the following heads;—the age of the Author,—the time it may take from his more serious avocations,—and the tendency of the work itself.

When the respectable names of the Spectator, the Guardian, or the Rambler recur to our memory, we start, and are astonished at the presumption of a *puny Authorling*, who dares, at so early an age, tread in the steps of these Heroes of Wit and Literature. No one can suppose, that it is my intention to affect to rival these illustrious Predecessors. All that I can claim, is a sincere desire of executing that design in a narrower sphere, which they sustained with such applause in the wider Theatre of the world. My ambition, I hope is not illaudable; and if an apology is necessary for so early an attempt, I can plead the great examples both of ancient and modern Learning: Virgil and Pope produced their Pastorals long before the one became the glory of Rome as her Epick Poet, or the other of Britain, as her Philosopher and Satirist; if these

ex-

examples are objected to, as more peculiar to Poetry than Prose, Cicero's Treatise de Inventionem was the juvenile effort of that mind, which was in future time to point the thunders of its eloquence against the betrayers of their country; to crush the audacious villainy of a Catiline; or strip the deep hypocrisy of an Antony of its specious covering. If the above-mentioned compositions were only the preludes to the greater glories of a riper age, may not I, without incurring the charge of too much presumption, try the feebler efforts of my Genius, and by degrees attempt to accustom myself to undertakings of a more trying and arduous nature.

For the time which it may be thought to take from my more serious avocations, the answer will be briefly this. It only occupies a few leisure hours, which might be more triflingly, if not more unworthily employed. This is an harmless recreation at least. My only aim is, that my leisure moments may in some respects be amusing, and I hope in some degree instructive to others, as well as myself.—*Personal* reputation cannot be my object; as the voice neither of praise or calumny can affect him, who by remaining unknown,

known, remains equally inaccessible to either: The friends I should gain by this attempt would be useless, the enemies (if enemies I had) harmless. Profit cannot be my object, when the circulation is confined to such a narrow compass, and even that I would not wish to enlarge; if this Essay will defray the expences incident to such an undertaking, it is the summit of my hopes, and this, by the Patronage of the Circle I address myself to, I flatter myself I may perform.

To explain the nature and tendency of the work itself, is a task of greater length and difficulty; but this I shall willingly undertake, rather than leave the smallest part of this design unexplained, and consequently subject to ignorant misapprehensions, or wilful misconstruction. My design is to amuse, and as far as I am able to instruct. Trifling I shall endeavour as much as it is in my power to avoid; and the least tendency to immorality or profaneness, I absolutely, and in the strongest terms reprobate and disavow. Does any one ask from whence am I to collect the materials for such an undertaking? from whence can I have acquired a fund of knowledge, language, or observation sufficient to pursue this arduous plan?

plan? my Materials are copious; the whole range, the inexhaustible fund of topics, which every event in Life, every passion, every object present, lie before me; add to these, the stores which History, reading, and morality, or the offspring of a Muse just struggling into notice can supply, combined with the topics of the moment, or those which our peculiar situation can afford, together with the hints; which those, who think the correspondence of the Microcosm worth their attention, may casually contribute; survey all these, and can I hesitate a moment, can I complain of a dearth of matter, or call my subject a barren one?

Quicquid agunt pueri; nostri farrago libelli.

————— *with faithful hints portrays*

The various passions youth's warm soul displays.

Not that I mean to exclude every thing of the light or humourous kind. The mind must sometimes be relieved from the severity of its stricter studies, and descending from the sublimer heights of speculative thought, deign to bend to inferior objects, and participate in less refined gratifications.

I consider the scene before me as a MICROCOSM, a world in miniature, where all the passions which

agitate the great original, are faithfully portrayed on a smaller scale; in which the endless variety of character, the different lights and shades, which the appetites, or peculiar situations throw us into, begin to discriminate, and expand themselves. The curious observer may here remark in the bud the different casts and turns of Genius, which will in future strongly characterize the leading features of the mind. He may see the embryo Statesman, who hereafter may wield and direct at pleasure the mighty and complex system of European Politics, now employing the whole extent of his abilities to circumvent his companions at their plays, or adjusting the important differences, which may arise between the contending heroes of his little circle; or a General, the future terror of France and Spain, now the dread only of his Equals, and the undisputed Lord and President of the boxing-ring. The Grays and Wallers of the rising generation here tune their little lyres; and he, who hereafter may sing the glories of Britain, must first celebrate at Eton the smaller glories of his College.

In the number and variety of the subjects which I may occasionally touch upon, it is impossible,

fible, but that somebody may find a foible or a vanity, which he is conscious of, slightly reprov'd or ridicul'd; but I solemnly renounce all intention of personal applications: It would not only be cruel and unwarrantable in itself, wantonly to expose defects, which all are in some measure liable to; but would also effectually defeat my own intentions. Who would favour or protect him, who, Drawcanfir like, indiscriminately flash'd and cut at all around him? my answer to this objection is brief,

*Qui capit ille facit,
Let the gall'd jade wince.*

I have now fairly and candidly stated every part of my plan, and answered every objection, which I think can be rais'd to it: I commit this to the public, as my first Essay, with fear and trembling. Conscious of the novelty of my situation, may I hope that the *Higher powers* will not look with a discouraging eye on my attempt. I have always seen too much care, too much attention paid to every appearance of application, and a laudable ambition of excelling, to suppose, that they will obstruct my harmless and inoffensive endeavours. If they find any thing blameable, let

them consider my age, and pardon it; if any thing praise-worthy, the good intent with which it was penn'd, and commend it. From my equals I look for still greater indulgence and less severity of criticism; let them read with candour and decide with impartiality, then I am not afraid of passing the ordeal of their judgment. The mind of youth is naturally too unbiass'd by prejudice, too susceptible of generous sentiments, to be unfavourable to one, whose only aim is their pleasure and amusement.

P. S. Whatever Persons should be inclined to favour the Author with their hints on any subject, they will be received and acknowledg'd with thankfulness. A letter directed to GREGORY GRIFFIN, the MICROCOSMOPOLITAN, and left at Mr. C. KNIGHT's, *Windsor*, will be safely deliver'd and no farther enquiries made, if the parties wish to remain concealed.

T H E
M I C R O C O S M.

No. II.—MONDAY, *November 13, 1786;*

Furare—et fallere Numen.———VIRGIL.
To swear and forswear.

Nec sine ulla mehercule ironia loquor.—CICERO.
To speak ironically.

✱✱✱✱ HAVING in my former paper, fully, and
✱✱ H ✱✱ I hope satisfactorily, explained the na-
✱✱✱✱ ture and tendency of this work, and
as far as I could foresee them, answered, if not ob-
viated all the objections most likely to be started
against an undertaking of the kind, I shall forbear
detaining my readers by any farther prefatory ob-
servations, and proceed immediately in the execu-
tion of my plan:—premising only, that, should it
appear to the elder part of my readers, that the

subject now before them is too lightly treated, I would not have them conclude from thence, that I am not well aware of its intrinsic weight and importance. Let them however be sensible, that *Gregory Griffin* does not, with the self-assumed arrogance of an universal Censurer, commit to the public these his lucubrations as dictatorial lectures on morality, but as the reflections of an impartial observer of all transactions, principally indeed those of this *lesser world*, of which he boasts himself a Citizen. These, as they afforded both entertainment and instruction to him in their formation, he presumes to hope may be the source of the one or the other to some of his readers. In this Character I would wish them to consider me in the following paper, and withal to keep in their minds a maxim, indisputable perhaps from the weight of its Authority,

Ridiculum acri
Fortius, ac melius magnas plerumque secat res.

Where moral precepts fail,
The sneer of ridicule will oft prevail.

It has often occurred as a matter of surprise to me and a few friends, who like myself can find pleasure in such speculations as arise more immediately

diately from common occurrences, that, among the crowds of pretenders, who profess to teach every accomplishment, necessary or unnecessary, to form the character of a complete gentleman, no one has as yet attempted to give instructions in a Science, the use of which is more generally adopted, by all ranks of people, than perhaps any other under the sun.—The reader will probably guess, that I allude to the noble art of SWEARING.

So universally indeed does this practice prevail, that it pervades all stations and degrees of men, from the Peer to the Porter, from the Minister to the Mechanic. It is the bond of faith, the seal of protestations, (the oaths of lovers indeed are a theme too trite to need discussion here) and the universal Succedaneum for logical or even rational demonstration. And here I cannot forbear reflecting on the infinite improvements made by moderns in the method of elucidating and confirming all matters of opinion. A man now-a-days has need but to acquire one quality, *Impudence*, and to get rid of a troublesome companion, *Conscience*, to establish whatever maxims he may take in his head. Let him but confirm with an oath the most improbable conjectures, and if any one calls his
honour

honour in question, the manner of settling all such disputes is too obvious to need explanation. And by these means how much unnecessary trouble does he save the rational talents of his auditors; what a world of useless investigation! Who can help lamenting that this method of arguing was not long ago adopted? We should then probably have escaped being pestered by the eternal disputations of that useless set of creatures called Philosophers; as any tolerable swordsman might have settled the universal system according to his own plan, and made the planets move by what regulations he pleased, provided he was ready, in the *Newgate* phrase, "*to swear through thick and thin.*"

But this is a small part only of the advantages attendant on the extensive practice of this art. In the councils of the cabinet, and the wranglings of the bar, it adds weight to the most striking arguments, and by its authority enforces conviction.

It is an old proverbial expression, that "*there go two words to a bargain;*" now I should not a little admire the ingenuity of that calculator, who could define, to any tolerable degree of exactness, how many *oaths* go to one in these days; for I am confident,

fidest, that there is no business carried on, from the wealthiest bargains of the Exchange, to the fix-penny chafferings of a St. Giles's huckster, in which swearing has not a considerable share. And almost every tradesman, "*meek and much a liar,*" will, if his veracity be called in question, coolly consign to Satan some portion of himself, *payable on demand*, in case his goods be not found answerable to his description of their quality.

I remember to have heard of a person of great talents for enquiry, who, to inform himself whether the land or the water bore the greater proportion in the Globe, contrived to cut out, with extreme nicety, from a map, the different portions of each, and by weighing them together, decided it, in favour of which it is not now material:— Could this experiment be made with regard to the proportion which oaths bear to the rest of our modern conversation, I own I am not without my suspicions, that the former scale would in some cases preponderate; nay, certain I am, that these harmless expletives constitute considerably the *weightiest* part in the discourse of those, who, either by their own ignorant vanity, or the contemptuous mock admiration of others, have been dig-

dignified with the title of BUCKS. And this indeed, as well in that smaller circle which falls more immediately under my observation, as in the more enlarged society of *men*; among whom, to a BUCK who has the honour to serve his Majesty, a habit of swearing is an appendage as absolutely essential as a cockade or a commission: And many a one there is among this order, who will sit down with equal ardour and self-complacency, to devise the cut of a coat, or the form of an execration.

Nay, even the *female* sex have, to their no small credit, caught the *happy contagion*; and there is scarce a Mercer's wife in the Kingdom, but has her innocent unmeaning imprecations, her little oaths "*softened into nonsense*," and with squeaking treble, mincing blasphemy into *odsbodikins*, *slitterkins*, and such like, will "*swear you like a sucking dove, ay, an it were any nightingale*."

That it is one of the accomplishments of *boys*, is more than sufficiently obvious, when there is scarce one, though he be but five years old, that does not lisp out the oaths he has heard drop from the mouths of his elders; while the happy parent
con-

congratulates himself on the early improvement of his offspring, and smiles, to discover the promising seeds of manly wit in the sprightly sallies of puerile execration. On which topic I remember to have heard an honest Hibernian divine, whose zeal for morality would sometimes hurry him a little beyond the limits of good grammar or good sense, in the height of declamation, declare, that "*the little children, that could neither speak, nor walk, run about the streets blaspheming.*"

Thus then, through all ranks and stages of life, is Swearing the very hinge of conversation! It is the conclusive supplement to argument, the apology for wit, the universal medium through which every thought is conveyed; and as to the violent passions, it is (to use the words of the poet) "*the very midwife of the mind;*" and is equally serviceable in bringing forth the sensations of anger or kindness, hope or fear; the extacies of extravagant delight, or the agonies of comfortless despair. What mortal among us is there, that, when any misfortune comes on him unexpectedly, does not find himself wonderfully lightened of the load of his sorrow, by pouring out the abundance of his vexation in showers of curses on the author of
his

his calamity? What gamester, who has reduced himself from opulence to beggary, by the intemperate indulgence of a mad infatuation, does not, after sitting down and venting his execrations for half an hour against his ill fortune and his folly, get up again greatly relieved by so happy an expedient.

Since then the advantages arising from an early initiation into the practice of swearing must so evidently appear to every person unprejudiced against it, by notions (now indeed almost out of date) of religion and morality, I cannot but be surprized, that no one has as yet attempted to reduce to system, and teach the theory of an art, the practical part of which is so universally known and adopted. An undertaking of this kind could not surely fail of success; especially in an age like this, when attempts of a much more arduous nature, are every day presented to our notice: when pigs are brought to exercise all the functions of rationality; and Hibernians profess to teach the true pronunciation of the English tongue.

It is not so very far removed, but that some of my readers must recollect the time, when the noble
art

art of *boxing*, was, by the ever-memorable FIGG and BROUGHTON, reduced to a complete and perfect system; and the Nobility and Gentry were taught theoretically as well as practically, to bruise the bodies, and (to use a technical term) *darken the daylights* of each other, with the vigour of a Hercules, tempered with the grace of an Apollo. And it is but a little time, since a celebrated Foreigner actually instructed some persons, of no inconsiderable rank, of both sexes, in the art of *eating Soup* with ease and dexterity; (though in my humble opinion, few people could need a preceptor to shew them the way to their mouths.)—Of much more utility, and surely not less successful would be the plan I recommend.—Many there were, who, from tenderness of age, or delicacy of constitution, were precluded from the diversion of *boxing*: to many the Science of *soup-eating* was useless and impracticable,—merely from having none to eat;—but all have their *oaths* in their own power, and of them neither emptiness of pocket, nor corporeal or mental imbecility prevent the free and uncontrouled use; and almost every body, however niggardly he may be in parting with any other of his possessions, scatters these with the most liberal profusion.

Thus

Thus then, if fostered by the hand of a skilful linguist, this Science might perhaps in time come nearer than any other to realize the extravagant idea of the ingenious but romantic Bishop Wilkins, of an universal language. At present indeed there are some slight inconveniencies attending the project, among which no small one is, that according to their present general usage, Oaths, like Yorick's French Friseur, by expressing too much generally mean nothing: insomuch that I now make it a rule to lessen my belief to every assertion, in proportion to the number of needless corroborative oaths by which it is supported. Nor am I indeed unreasonable in this; and in most cases how can I do otherwise? Is it in human nature to suppose, that when one of my friends declares his joy at seeing me, and his kind concern for my health, by intimating a hearty wish of my eternal perdition, that he really means what he says?

It has been observed by some ancient Philosopher, or Poet, or Moralist, (no matter which) that nothing could be more pernicious to mankind, than the fulfilling of their own wishes. And in truth I am inclined to be of his opinion; for many

a friend of mine, many a *fellow-citizen of this lesser world*, would, had his own heedless imprecations on himself taken effect, long ere this have groaned under the complication of almost every calamity capable of entering a human imagination. And with regard to the world at large, were this to be the case, I doubt whether there would be at this present time a leg or limb of any kind whole in his Majesty's service. So habitual indeed was this custom become to an Officer of my acquaintance, that though he had lost one of his eyes in the defence of his Country, he could not forego his favourite execration, but still used to vent his curses on them both, with the same ease and indifference as when they were both in his possession: So *blind* was he rendered to his own defects, by the continued practice of this—amusement. For in no other light than as an amusement or a polite accomplishment can it be considered by those who practice it. Did they consider it as a vice, they could not I am sure persevere in the indulgence of one, which has not even the common excuse of having for its aim the pursuit of pleasure, or the gratification of a darling appetite. I cannot believe they would so disinterestedly damn themselves, and vent in public company such imprecations,

cations, as in darkness and solitude they would tremble to conceive.

As an accomplishment therefore, and as an agreeable indication of youthful gaiety it must no doubt be considered ;—and should any one take the hint here offered him, and commence instructor in this noble Science, I need not, I believe, caution him against being an Englishman ; or (should he have the misfortune to be born in this country, remind him of the easy transformation of our commonest home-spun names, into the more fashionable French, or more musical Italian ; as for instance, that of Peters into Pedro, Nicholls into Nicolini, or Gerard into Girardot, and so on.—Having thus *un-englished* himself, let him get his advertisement drawn up in the Grahamic style, if not by the Doctor himself, professing, that

“ Having added to the early advantages of
 “ a Billingsgate education, the deepest re-
 “ searches, and most indefatigable industry,
 “ &c. &c. he now stands forth as an apt and
 “ accomplished teacher of the never-to-be-
 “ sufficiently extolled, the all-expressive, all-
 “ comprehensive, &c. &c. *Art of Swearing.*
 “ Ladies and Gentlemen instructed in the
 “ most

“most fashionable and elegant oaths; the
 “most peculiarly adapted to their several
 “ages, manners, and professions, &c. &c.
 “He has now ready for the press, a book en-
 “titled, *The Complete Oath Register; or, Every*
 “*Man his own Swearer*, containing oaths and
 “imprecations for all times, seasons, pur-
 “poses, and occasions. Also, *Sentimental*
 “*Oaths for the Ladies*. Likewise *Execrations*
 “*for the Year 1786.*”

Let him, I say, do this, and he may, I believe,
 assure himself of no little encouragement among
 the world at large; though far be it from me to
 presume to promise him any extraordinary coun-
 tenance in that smaller Circle which comes more
 immediately under the inspection of the MICRO-
 COSMOPOLITAN. B.

NOTES to CORRESPONDENTS.

TRANSLATICUS's request should have been immedi-
 ately attended to, had not this Number been previously sent
 to the Press.---It is not in my power to insert the favour
 of my “*never fading*” admirer, OBADIAH MEAN-
 WELL, as the subject has been before treated of, and his
 allusions are too local.

T H E
M I C R O C O S M.

No. III.—MONDAY, November 20, 1786.

Cessare, et ludere, et ungi.—HOR.

To lounge, and loiter, and perfume.

“ DEAR GREG,

✱✱✱ OUR Mic. is *dead Lounge*,—dissipates
✱✱ “ Y “ insufferable *Ennui* of tea table,—fills
✱✱✱ “ boring intervals of *Conversazione*,—Ex-
“ quisite substitute for switch,—and in short quite
“ the Ton:—By the by, in your next propose
“ some new *Lounge*.—They are all so *dingle* at
“ present, they are quite a *Bore*.—Lud, how much
“ I have written!—You charming creature, hint
“ some new *Lounge*.

“ Your’s,

“ NARCISSUS.”

Nar-

Narcissus's billet doux has led me into some reflections on the tenets of those Philosophers, (for I would not speak of so large a portion of our lesser world's inhabitants by a less respectable title) who profess in its different branches the doctrine of Apathy.

We find, that the walking and sitting disputants into which the beards of Greece were divided, originated indeed from one root: but afterwards branched into such innumerable little sprays, and so intersected each other, as not only to prevent all possibility of fruit, but when agitated by the least wind of contention, to fall together with a dry offensive sort of creaking, of that kind which Virgil describes by the *Aridus Fragor*. Sensible that these disagreeable effects proceeded from a ridiculous notion which each Metaphysical innovator entertained of improving on the doctrines of his predecessors, (men much older, and in course much wiser than himself) the founder of the sect of *Apathists* has condescended to borrow this opinion from the great Grecian Master, that *the end of Knowledge is to be certified that we know nothing*. Upon this tenet he logically and ingeniously builds an argument, which tends to support his main

Vol. I. C principle,

principle, viz. The summit of *Knowing* is to *Know* that *Knowledge* is a Non Entity. The idea of total ignorance cannot but be grating to the pride of a human creature; Ergo, should we not at once embrace a doctrine which saves us this reflection, by teaching us to believe that we know a great deal? Now this belief is the invariable characteristic of an Apathist; for an attempt at improvement would be in him, what an acknowledgement of conviction would formerly have been considered in the Stoic.

Not however entirely to preclude the idea of study, and at the same time to point out to his followers such a kind of pursuit as should neither impair the delicacy of their external texture, or interrupt their flow of animal spirits by head aches, vapours, and other nervous disorders, (the inseparable companions of intense application) this great founder has adopted the pithy precept of a brother legislator, and enjoins his followers to *Know themselves*.—Themselves therefore, strictly obedient to this injunction, and themselves alone, they study. The vulgar herd of Mortals are blinded by Ambition, elated by Hope, depressed by Fear, melted by Love, tortured by Jealousy,
and

and in short racked by all the vicissitudes of the more violent, or agitated by the quick transitions of the softer passions. There are those who would hear of the enfranchisement of Greece, and the desolation of the Palatinate, with the same emotion ; and distinguish no essential difference in the characters of Alexander and Uncle Toby : But even these would be infinitely disordered to find the œconomy of their apartments deranged by an unlucky Kitten, almost faint at a broken pane, and be absolutely taken ill of an everted coal-box. The *genuine Apathist* alone, equally superior to the violent attacks of passion, and the teasing impertinence of fretfulness, has, notwithstanding these advantages, condescension sufficient to confine himself to the humbler sphere of the social duties ; that is, he eats and drinks with the most refined politeness ; and would rather forfeit his existence than be guilty of such a solecism in good breeding, as to drain a tea-pot, or replenish his own cup before those of his companions.

Not but he frequently exercises functions of a different nature, and *personates* the Man of Taste, the Genius, and the Critic ; (nay, there have been known those who have entertained certain vague no-

tions of a groveling quality called *Common sense*.) He has in short the reputation of being every thing, with the satisfaction of being nothing. I have known a complete adept in the external forms required on such an occasion, by one short sentence (carefully omitting the Articles, Pronouns, and Verb Substantive) establish or destroy the fame of the most capital hoifiers. And any one who is acquainted with the signs whereby to distinguish them, may not unfrequently see the most eminent among them in yawning majesty, gaping out the character of an unread author to their astonished retainers.

Wit indeed is a bagatelle for which they seem to entertain the utmost aversion, and to discourage not only among their own body, but in any promiscuous company into which they may chance to be thrown; and this, not by the trite path of stale dogmatical precepts, but by the more uncommon and striking method of example. And to shew how successful is this plan, I will venture to assert, that any one who should hear but a single jest of a genuine Apathist, would, for at least a week afterwards, be thoroughly convinced of the impropriety of being facetious.

But

But as in this tenet I perfectly agree with the Apathist, that “*example strikes where precept fails*,” it will perhaps more clearly than any description of mine, illustrate the true character of what is called in the phrase of our citizens a *Dead Lounger*, to lay before them a second favour of my old friend and correspondent Narcissus. It is a journal of his Sunday’s employment; and if I may judge from the compleat system which it contains, must be the production of a profound adept. He desires my decision on his plan of life; but as I am not yet grown callous in the office of a Cenfor, I consign him to the customary method of trial by a jury of his *Peers*.

“DEAR GREG,

“To dissipate *Vapeur* what remedy d’ye think
 “have chosen? To write journal, He! He! He!
 “Want to know how I kill time; your opinion,

“Your’s,

“NARCISSUS.”

“*Sunday Morning, Half past Nine.* Yawned;—
 “execrably sleepy.

Ten. Read half your bill.—Head ach.

C 3

“*Half*—

“ *Half past Ten.* Too cold for church.—Head ach
 “ increased by bell.—N. B. To change my apart-
 “ ment that I may avoid that noise.

“ *Eleven to Twelve.* Took my chocolate.—Read
 “ half a page of Henrietta Harville.—Mem. Never
 “ to read Sentimental Novels after the 1st. of May,
 “ or before 1st. of November.

“ *Twelve.* Terrace,—not a soul.—On my re-
 “ turn saw cocked hat with man under it.

“ *Half past One.* Dinner.—No appetite.

“ *Two.* Froth called.—Argument with Froth
 “ on long quarter'd shoes.—N. B. Froth dismally
 “ in the wrong.

“ *Three to Four.* Slept.—Dreamt of Butterflies.

“ *Four.* Dress'd for Castle prayers.

“ *Half past Four.* Lounged with Froth to Castle
 “ prayers.—'Stonishing Rou.—Man in Buzz wig.—
 “ Fribble in thread stockings.—Mem. Froth and
 “ self to drop his acquaintance.—Mem. Broke little
 “ boy's head.—Mem. Gave the dog a shilling.

“ *Half past Five.* Sipped my tea with Feather.—
 “ N. B. His silk stockings.—N. B. The pattern seen
 “ last Winter in town.—N. B. Not to tell him till
 “ he has worn them.

“ *Six to Half past.* Yawned and Rou'd.

“ *Half past to Seven.* Rou'd and Yawned.

“ *Seven*

“ *Seven to Eight.* Got vapours by looking out
“ Microcosm.

“ *Eight to Nine.* Wrote my journal.—Buckled
“ my shoe.

“ *Nine to Ten.* Intolerable Vapours.—N. B. Va-
“ pours greatest bore in Universe.

“ *Ten to half past.* Lounged to Dapper’s room.—

“ Caught him reading Latin.—Smoked him.—

“ Rou’d him.—Mem. Dapper in covered buttons.

“ —*O imitatores, ser, ser, ser,* Lud, my memory !

“ Do you remember the line in Virgil, Greg?

“ *Half past Ten to Eleven.* Put on slippers and
“ night gown.—Picked teeth.

“ *Eleven to Twelve.* Went to bed.”

As an acknowledgement for the assistance Narcissus has afforded me, it is but reasonable that I should, as far as lies in my power, comply with the concluding request of his first billet. There is at present a vacant seat in the *Lounging club*, occasioned by the expulsion of one of its members for explaining a passage in Horace. As far as mental qualifications have any weight in the scale, he is perfectly adapted to fill the chair. The honour of being a candidate, was, by the unanimous votes of the society, conferred on the Microcosmopolitan ; and an evening accordingly fixed for my

examination. Having received timely notice of their intentions, I prepared myself accordingly ; and at about half past four was ushered into an apartment, in which at a modest distance from a tea equipage, were seated five respectable personages.

Now, gentle Reader, before I proceed in the account of my reception, it is necessary that I premise, that it is not the mere mechanical qualities of an Author, which have induced me to assume the character of a MICROCOSMOPOLITAN; but that as my predecessor with the short face, derived perhaps more dignity from that distinguishing feature which was to set him apart from the rest of mankind, than from any observation in his whole work, so nature seems to have cut me out for a periodical writer, by endowing a long nose of mine with so strange a predilection for my chin, as on most occasions to form no very harmonious cadence in my organs of elocution.

“ Hinc mihi prima mali labes : Hence the first origin of all my ill : ” For when in return to the extravagant politeness of the whole room, I began to attempt something like a compliment, it had so visible an effect on the nerves of my audience, that

that forgetting the etiquette of receiving a stranger, they with one accord applied their hands to the offended seat of hearing. Nay, so violent were the emotions of one of them, that he sprang across the table with the agility of a monkey, articulating, as well as the chattering of his teeth would allow him, "*I hope in Gad the animal is ta—a—ame.*" An universal titter was the immediate consequence of this ejaculation, when the president turning to me with a self complacent apologizing simper, observed, that "*I must excuse Mr. Tinsel's oddities, as I should find him upon the whole a lounging Creeter.*" Upon my bowing, a general silence ensued, till one of the company, in a voice which left me to doubt whether he was broad awake, yawned out, "*Tinsel, you have wetted my stocking.*" The whole room, except Tinsel, (whose late alarm had forced him to have recourse to an adjacent lavender bottle) as if they had preconcerted a reply, reiterated *Twaddle*. So general an exclamation in a term which came nearer to *Waddle* than any thing I had any idea of, I mistook for a personal application to me, till I saw the harmless creatures unanimously applying their white handkerchiefs to the injured stocking.

As soon as this important concern was adjusted, the president, addressing himself to me, told me, He had perused the title page of my work, and was much pleased with the style; that the design, as explained there was exquisite; that having, by an unfortunate accident lost one of their number, they had unanimously agreed to make me the offer of his seat. And that should I myself start any objections to the proposals, they wished to make my paper the medium for publishing this vacancy to the world; "One thing, added he, Mr. Griffin, this society and myself have been ineffably puzzled on, which is, whether your plan is grounded on Personal Satire or no?" Having made my acknowledgements to the company in general for the intended honour, I replied, that when it should be convenient to him to favour my first paper with a perusal, his objection would answer itself: That at present I should only assure him, that on my side, nothing more than general allusions were intended, and on that of my fellow-citizens, "*Qui capit ille facit: Let the gall'd jade wince.*"

I had scarce pronounced these words when I became sensible of my carelessness by the significant looks

looks of the company. The conversation immediately turned on stockings; when, as I was out of my element, I sat for some time totally silent; and upon a proper opportunity took my leave, and retired to reflect on the scene I had quitted. On coming home I found Narcissus's letters, and divesting myself of all the petulance of a disappointed candidate, sat down immediately to advertise him of this opportunity. Convinced, notwithstanding the plausible arguments of those, who under the immediate impulse of any favourite passion, cannot brook the idea of total listlessness, that an Apathist is as much a real, as a GRIFFIN is an imaginary being.

C.

NOTES to CORRESPONDENTS.


Availing myself of the permission of OCTAVIUS, I shall adapt his letter to the limits of my work, and shall take the same liberty with that of MUSIDORUS. My *visionary* friend, who signs himself AN ETONIAN, has express'd himself in such a strain of encomium, as I could not insert without incurring the imputation of vanity.

T H E
M I C R O C O S M.

No. IV.—MONDAY, November 27, 1786.

*I demens et sævas curre per Alpes,
Ut Pueris placeas & declamatio fias.*—JUVENAL.

*Climb o'er the Alps, thou rash ambitious fool,
To please the boys and be a theme at School.*—DRYDEN.

S the subject of the following discourse is the examination of a passion more peculiarly prevalent in the minds of youth; and as I conceive it would be but an indifferent compliment to the talents of the younger part of my readers, to consider it necessary to apologize to them for the more serious nature of it; I shall, without detaining them any further by unnecessary introduction, proceed to my subject, *the Love of Fame*. And this I consider not only as that exalted principle, which has in all ages produced patriots and heroes, but when in a depraved state, contributing more perhaps to the promotion of immorality, than our most violent passions and most craving appetites.

petites. For the observer will discover, that whenever this *primum mobile* of the mind is diverted from the pursuit of more laudable ambition, to the desire of false honour, and criminal adulation, its tendency is *only* diverted while its power remains unimpaired. This principle, capable of carrying us to the highest pitch of human ambition, or, on the other hand sinking us to the lowest ebb of depravity, is implanted in our natures ; it is inherent in, and inseparable from humanity ; the reins are thrown into our hands, and the rest remains with ourselves.

It should seem then, that a reasonable being, conscious that he is possessed of such an internal principle, aware of the consequences immediately attending on a proper or improper use of it, and having the direction of it in his own power, could hardly err in the application : But unfortunately it happens, that the distribution of praise lies equally in the hands of all ; and from hence it is, that the commonalty derive a power, for which they are far from being qualified by greater nicety of judgment or accuracy of observation. And these, too frequently judging more from outward appearance than an investigation of intrinsic merit,

it.

it will happen, that by far the greater share of glory attends upon what are called great actions ; which, by their superior splendor, attract and dazzle the eyes of the multitude more than a sober train of benevolence, which passes over the mind with the smooth uniformity of a polished surface, not marked by any eminent feature, or distinguished by any leading characteristic. Hence, a wide barrier is fixt between actions glorious to the individual, and such as are useful to the community ; and the effects produced by it are not so much to be wondered at as lamented. The life of a man beneficial to society, is most commonly past in a continued series of benevolent actions, frequently in a circle extremely contracted ; but this is not a life of glory, and tho' an useful uniformity may demand our praise, it lays no claim to our admiration. So unvaried indeed is the tenour of a life really useful, and not unusually charged with so little incident, that the muse, whose office it is to shed a perfunctory tear over the ashes of the deceased, has frequently been obliged, by the barrenness of the subject, to have recourse to topics of praise entirely fictitious ; or relinquish a theme rendered so uninteresting by its uniformity. And if we except that of Pope on Mrs. Corbet,

and.

and the original of Crasshaw, from which Pope seems to have transfused no inconsiderable part of his own performance, there does not perhaps remain in our language, an elegant epitaph on any person undistinguished by military, civil, or literary exertions. I would wish however to except the following lines, which, in a parish in Yorkshire, cover the bones of an honest yeoman; whose merit seems to have been understood by the author, tho' he might have been prevented from recurring to feigned topics by the want of art evident in the construction of the lines.—I shall subject them to the perusal of my reader; they are as follow ;

*John Bell Brokenbow
Lies under this stone,
Four of my eene sonnes
Laied it on my weame,
I was master of my meat,
Master of my wife,
I lived on my own lands
Without mickle strife.*

How much more glorious is this simple testimony to the undistinguished merits of a private man, than if it had announced the bones of a general,

general, who by the singular favour of fortune, had, with the loss of only twenty thousand individuals of the same country with himself, slaughtered two hundred thousand, guilty of being divided from it by a narrow sea, or a chain of mountains. The merit of the former character is evidently superior ; yet our admiration had undoubtedly sided with the latter.

Not that this meritorious inaction is always undistinguished by observation and applause ; the character of Atticus, is not perhaps less remarkable for its literary excellence, than the inactive acquiescence which he betrayed at a period when any degree of eminence must have been attended with consequences more or less repugnant to the interests of his country. How different is this patriotic conquest over a desire of glory not to be obtained in a manner consistent with his country's welfare, from the obstinacy of another character equally eminent about the same time, who would have

*“ Blush'd if Cato's house had stood,
“ Secure, and flourish'd in a civil war.”*

It should seem doubtful whether the poet meant this sentiment for the effect of a natural impulse on the occasion which introduces it, or the result
of

of an affectation eminent in the original character; and which could not have escaped the author tho' so much its admirer: Certain I am, that it could not proceed from the feelings of nature, even admitting the possibility of any connection subsisting between an individual and his country, which did not in a stronger manner tie him to his family. I shall not at present arraign the policy which dictated a law to the Athenians, inflicting disgrace and ignominy on any one who in a public dissention might remain inactive; however, the observer may discover in this edict, the source of those disturbances which continually divided the state, and ended but in its ruin.

But to return to my subject, and perhaps it may not be entirely foreign from it, to observe, that admitting the desire of glory to have so great an influence as I contend it is possessed of; the higher ranks in life may be cleared of an imputation under which they have long laboured. I allude to an opinion extremely prevalent, that all national depravity and corruption, before it descends to the lower classes, originates among their superiors. The regard paid by the lower ranks to the example and authority of their superiors, has been cited,
and

and with some degree of plausibility, to support this opinion ; but is not this influence effectually and entirely counterbalanced, by the distribution of censure and applause which resides entirely in the hands of the commonalty ? or can any one doubt the influence which the common people have with their superiors, when he sees the forms of government change with the disposition of the people ; and the affectation of ignorance and illiberality assumed by the higher orders at home, in their dress, manners, and conversation ? We readily grant a propensity in the inferior orders to imitate the actions of their superiors ; but is not imitation the height of flattery ? and does not a readiness to receive and copy the depraved manners of a superior order, suppose a previous depravity in the people ?

Perhaps the only true criterion of the utility or dangerous tendency of this passion, is the disposition of the times ; for the same spirit which in a more corrupt period carries the enthusiast for it to the height of excess and extravagance, would, in an æra of more simple manners, have produced the exact reverse ;

“ *Lucullus, when frugality could charm,
“ Had roasted turnips in his Sabine farm.”*

and

and Cincinnatus, had he lived in a period less disposed to honour a virtuous poverty, might probably have changed the frugality of his simple meal, for the luxury of the *Apollō*.

The present path to glory, and consequently that which its votaries pursue, is faction; and even in this lesser world the observer may discover a demagogue in embryo, distinguished perhaps only for stronger powers of vociferation. But here, as upon all other occasions, the MICROCOSMOPOLITAN would wish to avoid misapprehension, and while he reprobates a turbulence of behaviour, does not wish his readers entirely to discard their judgment and free will, and to degrade themselves to the rank of non-entities, or, according to a more accepted phrase, *cyphers*. The great increase of the abovementioned species calls for attention; whether it proceeds from a prevailing idea that an individual, like a numerical figure, is made of more consequence by the addition of a cypher, or from a fear in its promoters, of a discovery of their own weakness; as the cruel policy of Semiramis had its origin in an apprehension, that her sex might be discovered by an unprecedented want of beard. From whatever cause
the

the present increase of this species arises, it is now grown to so formidable an height, as to require the attention of the public, and more particularly of the MICROCOSMOPOLITAN.

I would wish to present to the perusal of my readers, the following lines, not entirely foreign from some part of this essay ; and at the same time admonish them, that the smile of Melpomene at the birth of a poet is useless, without that of his readers on his publication.

I.

Within the sounding quiver's hollow womb
Repose the darts of praise and harmony ;
Goddeſs draw forth the choſen ſhaft ; at whom
Shall the ſwift arrows of the muſes fly ?
By the great almighty mind,
For man's highly favour'd race,
Various bleſſings were deſign'd,
Bounties of ſuperior grace ;
Here the fat and fertile ground
Waves the flood of Harveſt round
Or fervid wine's extatic juice
Cluster-curved Vines produce ;

A fullen land of lazy lakes
Rhine slowly winding to the Ocean makes,
This rescued from the eager wave
Human art has dar'd to save,

While o'er each foggy pool and cheerless fen
Hums the busy buz of men.

A warlike nation bent on deathful deeds
From daring actions safety seeks, and fame,
Rush thro' the ranks, where'er the battle bleeds,
Or whirl their neighing courfers thro' the flame.
The Indian youth beneath the shade
More loves repose and peace,
And underneath his plantain laid
Sings indolence and ease.

II.

Thus far with unerring hand
All ruling providence has plann'd,
Thus far impartial to divide
Nor all to one, nor one to all denied.

But Order, heav'n-descended queen,
Where'er you deign to go,
Alone you fix the bounds between
Our happiness and woe,
Nor wealth, nor peace, nor without thee
Heav'n's first best bounty, Liberty,
Can bless our native land.

Then

Then come, O nymph! and o'er this isle
Dispense thy soul subduing smile,
And stretch thy lenient hand.

III.

Before time was, before the Day
Shot thro' the skies his golden ray,
A fightless mass, a wasteful wild
Tumultuous gulph, was all this fair creation,
Till you the shapeless chaos reconcil'd,
Each part commanding to its proper station!
Then hills upheav'd their verdant head,
Above a purer sky was spread,
And Ocean floated in his ample bed :
Then first creeping to the main
Rivers drew their tortuous train ;
Then from her fertile womb the earth
Brought forth at one ample birth,
All that through the waste of sky
Borne on oary pinions fly,
Or thro' the deep's dark caverns roam,
And wallowing dash the sea to foam
Tutor'd by your guiding sway,
The planets trace their pathless way,
The seasons in their order'd dance
In grateful interchange advance !

But

But when, O Goddess, wilt thou deign,
O'er favour'd man to stretch thy reign?
Then shall sedition's tempest cease,
The dashing storm be hush'd to peace,
The angry seas no longer roar,
But gently rolling kiss the shore,
While from the wave-worn rock the troubled
waters pour.

IV.

When pois'd athwart the lurid air,
The sword of vengeance pours a sanguine ray,
Or comets from their stream of blazing hair
Shake the blue pestilence, and adverse sway
Of refluus battle, o'er some high vic'd land;
Thro' the sick air the power of poison flies,
By gentler breezes now no longer fann'd,
Sultry and still; the native breathes and dies.
Yet often free from selfish fear
The son attends his father's bed,
Nor will disdain the social tear
In pleasing painful mood to shed.—
When chilling pine and cheerless penury,
Stretch o'er some needy house their wither'd hand
Where modest want alone retires to die,
Yet social love has shed her influence bland,
To cheer the sullen gloom of poverty.

For

For 'tis decreed, that every social joy,
In its partition should be multiplied,
Still be the same nor know the least alloy,
Tho' sympathy to thousands should divide
Our pleasures ; but when urg'd by dire distress,
The grief by others felt is made the less.

V.

Not so the ills sedition sows,
Midst sever'd friends and kindred foes ;
When the horrid joy of all,
Embitters ev'ry private fall.
Creeping from her secret source
Sedition holds her silent course,
With wat'ry weeds and sordid sedge
Skirting her unnoted edge,
Till scorning all her former bounds
She sweeps along the fertile grounds ;
And as in fullen solemn state she glides,
Receives into her train the tributary tides ;
Then rushing headlong from some craggy steep
She pours impetuous down and hurries to the
deep.

Ah ! luckless he, who o'er the tide
Shall hope his fragile bark to guide ;
While secure his sail is spread
The waves shall thunder o'er his head ;

But

But if, long tempest-tost, once more,
His crazy bark regain the shore,
There shall he sit and long lament
His youthful vigour vainly spent ;
And others warn, but warn, alas in vain,
In unambitious safety to remain.
Then happy he! who to the gale
Nor trusts too much the varying sail,
Nor rashly launching forth amain
Attempts the terrors of the wat'ry plain ;
But watchful, wary, when he sees
The ocean black beneath the breeze,
The cheerless sky with clouds o'erspread,
And darkness gath'ring round his head,
Trusts not too far but hastes to seek,
The shelter of some winding creek ;
Thence sees the waves by whirlwinds tost,
And rash ambition's vessel lost ;
Hears the mad pilot late deplore,
The shifting sail, the faithless oar,
And hears the shriek of death, the shriek that's
heard no more.

THE
MICROCOSM.

No. V.—MONDAY, *December 4, 1786.*

Animo umbris rerum satisfacere.

BACON, *de Augm. Scien.*

To satisfy the mind with speculation.

Oppida quodam tempore florentissima, nunc prostrata et diruta ante oculos jacent.—SULP. ad Cic.

*The ruins of Cities formerly flourishing and powerful,
now lie scattered before my eyes.*

S I am naturally of a thoughtful and
A speculative turn of mind, it is a fa-
vourite amusement with me, not only
to traverse the well known regions of Ancient His-
tory, but to launch into the wider ocean of con-
jecture, and explore in fancy, the *Terra incog-
nita* of probability. In the course of these re-
searches,

searches, the mind expatiates in a larger field, than the narrow and confined limits of known facts will otherwise permit it; in one case the inexhaustible stores of a fertile imagination supply abundant materials to our speculations; and we are left at full liberty to form air-drawn systems, and build impracticable theories as extravagant as the wildest flights of fancy could ever suggest: and this has been the favourite, tho' perhaps useless, employment of many ingenious men, and is an innocent at least, and copious source of amusement, which fills up the languid intervals of a leisure hour. The Atalantis of Plato, the Utopia of Sir Thomas More, and the Oceana of Dr. Harrington, fall (*sit verbo venia*) under the description of air-drawn and impracticable, tho' ingenious systems. In the other case, we are confined to the limits of authenticated History, and Fancy makes a vain effort to burst those chains, which knowledge and truth have imposed upon her; we can only reflect, and draw useful inferences from the various events which crowd the historic page; from the various calamities which the treachery, the ambition, and the crimes of one small part of mankind have undeservedly drawn down on the infinitely larger portion that remains.

This

This is in part the opinion of one of the most learned and ingenious men of our age; what he applies to the difference between poetry and history, I shall apply to that between history and conjecture.

* “*Nimum augustis finibus continetur Historia, nimium severas habet operis sui leges. Res gestas tradit, eventorum vestigiis insistit: quod contigit, non quod contigisse potuit aut oportuit narrandum, nec quo documenti opportunitas, aut probabilitatis ratio vocat, sed quo facti necessitas cogit, eundem. Historia res et personas certas et constitutas tractat, infinitas et universales Poesis: illa præscriptum iter certâ conficit via, hæc liberis naturæ spatiis fruitur.*”

“History is confined within too narrow limits, is bound by too severe restrictions; she records transactions, and adheres to the traces of past deeds; she relates what has, not what *might* or ought to have happened; she is to follow, not where an opportunity of drawing a moral inference, or venturing a *probable conjecture* calls her, but where the necessity of relating a fact compels her. History treats of particular and determined characters; Poetry comprehends those of every de-

* *Lowth de Poesi Hebræorum.*

description: The one finishes her allotted journey by a certain road; the other expatiates in the ample field of unbounded nature."

But even the historic field is an extensive range for the most comprehensive mind; and the sagacious reflections of learning on so copious a subject, have filled the volumes of knowledge and philosophy. But to exercise the speculative powers of the mind, is to me at least a more pleasing employment; especially, if forming our judgment from the past events of antiquity, and asserting, what is surely no extravagant assertion, that similar causes will produce similar effects, we thence deduce the most probable consequences: And thus tempering the licentiousness of conjecture with the caution of experience, form that hypothesis, which according to the general course of human events, and with due allowance for those unexpected incidents which often give the decisive bias to the most important transactions, is least liable to objection, and the most probable consequence of a given proposition.

Indulging this favourite propensity, I grounded the following speculation on the extract from

Sulpicius's consolatory letter to Cicero, which is prefixed to this essay.

When I reflect on the fate of the different Empires, which have at various periods enslaved mankind; when I consider those stupendous frames of political mechanism, which have so long engaged the attention and claimed the admiration of the Philosopher and Speculatist, but whose remaining vestiges are to be traced only in the records of History, or discoverable in the magnificent ruins of desolated countries; I cannot but suppose, that a similar fate awaits the now flourishing nations of the civilized world: An event, that will most probably take place in some distant period, when the Sun of Science will be again obscured in the shades of ignorance, and once more be immersed in primitive barbarism.

The Empires of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, once fondly flattered themselves, that their splendor would be as lasting as the frame of the Universe; and the Roman had a still stronger claim to immortality; as, by comprehending the whole then known globe within its boundaries, it seemed to be equally secure from the impetuous violence
of

of an open enemy, or the more certain, tho' flower operations of the great destroyer, Time.

When 'those "Subverters of Nations," and "Scourges in the hand of God," as they were emphatically stiled by the contemporary Historians, who so sensibly felt the calamities they described, an Attila or an Alaric had overturned this mighty fabric; its disjointed members were divided into numberless distinct bodies; from one or the other of which many of the present European Powers derive their origin. The Lombards, Goths, and Huns, are instances too well known to need further illustration; one alone is sufficient; the present Emperors of Germany are, or pretend to be, seated on the throne of Augustus, the legal successors of the Roman Cæsars.

The Eastern or Constantinopolitan Empire still subsisted, the feeble remnant of that majesty, which once had swayed the sceptre of the world. But the rising power of the Ottoman arms, under the auspices of the second Mahomet, totally obscured this only remaining ray of the declining splendor of the Roman system. The setting glory of the Saracen and Arabian Caliphs entirely vanished

nished before the Turkish Crescent; and the blood-stained laurels of Genghis and Kouli Khan, polluted by that destructive ferocity which marked the rapidity of their conquests, have long since faded and withered from their brows. To close this long list of the vanity of human grandeur, the only remaining branch of the illustrious house of Tamerlane, is at this moment a precarious dependant on the capricious will of a few private Merchants.

The destruction of most of these immense powers originated from a quarter, whence it was not dreaded till it was felt; from the attacks of barbarous and uncivilized nations. The Roman indeed seems to have foreseen the tempest which was to overwhelm him, and with all the precaution, which human prudence could suggest, to have guarded against it by the strong barriers and veteran legions which garrison'd the towns on the banks of the Danube and the Rhine. The event proved the wisdom of that foresight which dictated the measure; for the moment the destructive policy of Constantine removed these barriers, the Barbarians rushed in at the opening, and entirely destroyed the tottering fabric.

Perhaps

Perhaps in future ages, by analogy of reasoning, some Savage Tribes, now roaming over the vast deserts of Asia or America, may enrich themselves with the fertile possessions of their more polished neighbours; and like second Goths, raise the rude structure of Ignorance and Barbarism on the ruins of Philosophy, Science, and Civilization.—When the wounds of national dissention are healed, and that liberty, for which it has struggled against the authority of the Parent Country, is established on the firm basis of acknowledged constitutional rights, the* Phænomenon of an independent Transatlantic state may give the fatal blow to European Politics, and America perhaps arise the destined seat of a future Empire.

D 5

When

* To shew that speculation is in some instances at least well grounded, I shall lay before my readers a passage from Hume, which proves, that so long ago as the year 1606, the speculatists of that age foretold, what a recent event has justified, “*Speculative reasoners, during that age, raised many objections to planting remote colonies; and foretold, that after draining their mother country of its inhabitants, they would soon shake off her yoke, and erect an independent government in America.*” Vol 6. Page 127. By referring to the original text, the reader will find, that the Historian was no friend to this doctrine; but the event has justified the prediction.

When we compare Tacitus's treatise *on the Manners of the Germans*, with Lafitau's account of the *American Tribes*, we cannot but be struck with the similarity of the subject; and we may remark, that at the period when Tacitus wrote, when the Roman Empire was in its meridian glory, Germany, Gaul, and Britain, now the seats of Science and Literature, were nearly in the same state of unpolished nature, which is the present characteristic of the American Tribes, whom Lafitau describes. Europe has now nearly arrived at the highest pitch of refinement and civilization. It has been observed, that the human mind will never remain inactive, but will always have either a progressive or retrograde motion; will either gain the heights of Excellence or sink into the abyss of Depravity; and there is a degree in both, beyond which it can neither rise or fall, but like the flood, when it has gained the highest shore, will naturally retreat, and when at the lowest ebb, will gradually recover its former height. The truth of this observation has been already too severely exemplified to be doubted; may not a similar corruption of manners produce a similar decline in the arts and military prowess? and is it an extravagant conjecture, that in process of time the same fate may
overwhelm

overwhelm us, which destroyed the Empires before us?

But it is time to restrain the lawless efforts of Imagination, and to recal the attention of the mind from a speculation, in whose windings and labyrinths our directing clue may be lost; where the powers of delusion may fascinate the mental eye, and involve us in inextricable darkness and error.

If the reader will indulge me a few moments longer in the self-created phantoms of my brain, I shall give way to the melancholy-pleasing ideas of my fancy; and pursuing my speculation, suppose what may be the probable state of Great-Britain at that period, when we shall no longer exist as an independent nation; when the chains of Slavery shall have gall'd our limbs, and Liberty be only that "*magni nominis umbra*," that "*Shadow of a mighty name*," which

wrinkled Beldams

Teach to their grand children as somewhat rare,

That anciently appeared, but when, extends

Beyond their Chronicle.—GRAY'S AGRIPPINA.

Perhaps

Perhaps the inquisitive Genius of Curiosity may then visit this island, from the same motives which now attract the traveller to the venerable ruins of Athens or Rome: the Antiquary may collect a series of British, with as much avidity, as he now arranges his Roman or Grecian coins; a true George the Third may engage the attention of Virtú as much as a genuine Augustus or Trajan; the older edition of Shakespeare, Milton, or Pope, may authorize a different reading, as much as an older manuscript of Homer, Cicero, or Virgil; the monumental records of Westminster-Abbey may be considered as the authentic testimonies of illustrious actions, as much as the inscriptions collected by Montfaucon or the Arundelian Marbles at Oxford. The ruins of an University may attract the admiration of the traveller; the plans and designs of the different buildings may be preserved with that reverence which we now pay to the ruins of Palmyra or Balbec. May not the same spirit which inspired Cicero when he beheld the porticos of Athens, seize some future Philosopher? the one has paid, the other will pay the homage of admiration due to departed Genius. As the one beheld with reverential awe those seats which had been dignified by the presence of a Socrates,

a Plato, and an Aristotle ; the other may behold with pious gratitude those, where the immortal Milton planned his Paradise Lost ; a Newton pierced through the clouds of philosophical error ; and the comprehensive mind of a Bacon burst the fetters of scholastic Pedantry, and boldly asserted the incontrovertible laws of Nature, Truth, and Learning. To contract myself to a narrower sphere, may not reflection heave a sigh, when she beholds the vestiges of this nursery of Genius, where so many Patriots, Philosophers, and Poets, each in their respective lines the boast of their native soil, first caught that generous enthusiasm for solid glory, which proved the source of such renown to themselves and their country ; by which they reflected a mutual light on each other ; and which enabled the one to immortalize by his pen, those exploits which the more active abilities of the other had emboldened him to perform.

A.

I beg leave to lay before my readers the following Poem, produced by reflections of a similar kind.

The

THE SLAVERY OF GREECE.

Unrival'd Greece! thou ever honour'd name,
Thou nurse of heroes dear to deathless Fame!
Tho' now to worth, to honour all unknown,
Thy lustre faded, and thy glories flown,
Yet still shall Memory with reverted eye
Trace thy past worth, and view thee with a sigh.

Thee freedom cherish'd once with fostering hand,
And breath'd undaunted valour through the land,
Here the stern spirit of the Spartan soil,
The child of Poverty, inur'd to toil.
Here lov'd by Pallas and the sacred Nine,
Once did fair Athens' tow'ry glories shine.
To bend the bow, or the bright faulchion wield,
To lift the bulwark of the brazen shield,
To toss the terror of the whizzing spear,
The conqu'ring standard's glitt'ring glories rear,
And join the madding battle's loud career, }
How skill'd the Greeks; confess what Persians slain
Were strew'd on Marathon's ensanguin'd plain;
When heaps on heaps the routed squadrons fell,
And with their gaudy myriads peopled hell.
What millions bold Leonidas withstood,
And seal'd the Grecian freedom with his blood;

Witness

Witness Thermopylæ! how fierce he trod,
How spoke a Hero, and how mov'd a God!
The rush of nations could alone sustain,
While half the ravag'd globe was arm'd in vain.
Let Leuctra say, let Mantinea tell,
How great Epaminondas fought and fell!

Nor war's vast art alone adorn'd thy fame,
"But mild Philosophy endear'd thy name."

Who knows not, sees not with admiring eye,
How Plato thought, how Socrates could die?

To bend the arch, to bid the column rise,
And the tall pile aspiring pierce the skies.

The awful fane magnificently great,

With pictur'd pomp to grace, and sculptur'd state,
This science taught; on Greece each science shone,
Here the bold statue started from the stone;

Here warm with life the swelling canvass glow'd;

Here big with thought the Poet's raptures flow'd:

Here Homer's lip was touch'd with sacred fire,

And wanton Sappho tun'd her amorous lyre;

Here bold Tyrtæus rous'd the enervate throng,

Awak'd to glory by th' inspiring song;

Here, Pindar soar'd a nobler, loftier way,

And brave Alcæus scorn'd a tyrant's sway.

Here gorgeous Tragedy with great controul

Touch'd every feeling of the impassion'd soul;

While

While in soft measure tripping to the song
Her comic Sister lightly danc'd along.—

This was thy state! but oh! how chang'd thy
fame,

And all thy glories fading into shame.

What? that thy bold, thy freedom-breathing land
Should crouch beneath a Tyrant's stern command!

That Servitude should bind in galling chain,

Whom Asia's millions once oppos'd in vain;

Who could have thought? who sees without a
groan,

Thy cities mouldering, and thy walls o'erthrown.

That where once tower'd the stately solemn fane,

Now moss-grown ruins strew the ravag'd plain,

And unobserv'd but by the traveller's eye,

Proud, vaulted domes in fretted fragments lye,

And the fall'n column on the dusty ground,

Pale Ivy throws its sluggish arms around.

Thy sons (sad change!) in abject bondage sigh;
Unpitied toil, and unlamented die.

Groan at the labours of the galling oar,

Or the dark caverns of the mine explore.

The glitt'ring tyranny of Othman's sons,

The pomp of horror which surrounds their
thrones,

Has

Has awed their servile spirits into fear,
Spurn'd by the foot they tremble and revere.
The day of Labor, Nights sad, sleepless hour,
Th' inflictive scourge of arbitrary power,
The bloody terror of the pointed steel,
The murderous stake, the agonizing wheel,
And (dreadful choice) the bowstring, or the bowl,
Damps their faint vigour, and unmans the soul.
Disastrous Fate! still tears will fill the eye,
Still recollection prompt the mournful sigh;
When to the mind recurs thy former fame,
And all the horrors of thy present shame.

So some tall rock, whose bare, broad bosom high,
Tow'rs from the earth, and braves the inclement
sky;

On whose vast top the blackening deluge pours,
At whose wide base the thundering Ocean roars;
In conscious pride its huge gigantic form
Surveys imperious and defies the storm.
Till worn by age, and mouldering to decay,
Th' insidious waters wash its base away,
It falls, and falling cleaves the trembling ground,
And spreads a tempest of destruction round.


B.

T H E
M I C R O C O S M.

No. VI.—MONDAY, December 11, 1787.

Turba Clientum.

A croud of Correspondents.

 HATEVER satisfaction the reader may receive from the perusal of the following letters, he is to attribute it to the favors of my unknown correspondents ; with whom I have taken the liberty allowed me of omitting some passages, which could not be inserted, without incurring, on my side, the imputation of vanity. As I have been forced to adapt their productions to the limits of my work, a few paragraphs, which had not an immediate reference to the subject, have been also suppressed, but not a line added.

“ To

“ TO MR. GREGORY GRIFFIN.

“ *Nunc adhibe puro*

“ *Pectore verba, puer, nunc te melioribus offer.*—HOR.

“ ————— *Now pliantly inure*

“ *The mind to virtue, while your heart is pure ;*

“ *Now suck in wisdom.* ——— FRANCIS.

“ SIR,

“ FULLY sensible that the noblest
 “ pursuit which can possibly engage the attention
 “ of a human being, next to the practice of Virtue
 “ itself, is the study of diminishing the numberless
 “ mad votaries, who daily flock to the alluring ban-
 “ ners of vice ; and by pointing out the latent quick-
 “ sands where so many heedless thousands have
 “ perished, exhort others to avoid a similar de-
 “ struction, by a sudden reform of their pernicious
 “ courses, and by eagerly embracing the proffered
 “ offers of repentance ; a mind eager to add its
 “ humble mite to this glorious undertaking, dic-
 “ tates the present epistle ; and hopes, that the sin-
 “ cerity of its intention will plead for the favor
 “ and patronage of the *Microcosmopolitan*.

“ Sages versed in the most abstruse sciences of
 “ Philosophy, those who thro’ all ages have
 “ made

“ made the most splendid appearance in the paths
“ of literature, and the estimation of the learned
“ world, have in many instances generously given
“ up the labours of their life, to the task of im-
“ planting the admonitions of morality in the
“ breast of their contemporaries.

“ In the vegetable and animal creation, early cul-
“ ture applied to the tender plant, or management to
“ the beast, as soon as either is capable of receiving
“ good or bad impressions, will remain, “until the
“ one is hewn down and cast into the fire,” and the
“ other perishes by the natural effects of age. The
“ Gardener’s hand can cause the delicate Honey-
“ suckle to entwine the Majestic Oak; the inha-
“ bitant of Ispahan tames the gigantic Elephant ;
“ the savage African traverses his native deserts on
“ the back of the stately Dromedary ; and the
“ farthest Citizen of Kamschatka passes over tracts
“ of ice and snow seemingly impervious, by the
“ wonderful sagacity which he has instilled into
“ Dogs. That the human mind is much more
“ wonderfully formed for a similar cultivation,
“ need not be observed.

“ Youth

“ Youth is the season, when every example,
“ every lesson which virtue or vice can inculcate are
“ the most certain to stamp lasting impressions on
“ the mind. Passions imbibed at an early period,
“ seldom fail to give a decisive bias to our future
“ life ; and conquering almost every opposition, to
“ govern the man with an arbitrary sway. Con-
“ vinced of this, how sincerely grateful should we
“ be for every endeavour which tends to the im-
“ portant point of our future felicity ; how cau-
“ tiously should we guard every trifling action
“ against the baleful influence of vice, or the in-
“ fidious blandishments of temptation.

“ Few breasts are so pure, or possess such an
“ absolute self-dominion, but that some one pas-
“ sion will by degrees, and by frequent indul-
“ gence, gain an ascendancy over the others ; and
“ work them into a state of such abject slavery, as
“ to render them entirely subservient to its own
“ authority. Would we but impartially examine
“ our own minds, and determine to discover it in
“ its rise, very little restraint might perhaps ut-
“ terly eradicate it in its infancy ; or reduce it at
“ least to such subjection, as to prevent it from
“ becoming our future bane.

“ But

“ But descending from subjects more important,
 “ give me leave to remark, with how much greater
 “ pleasure to themselves, with how much less cen-
 “ sure from the world at large, or particularly from
 “ their more immediate acquaintance, would the
 “ lives of individuals be passed, if each (although
 “ I fancy it is a thing utterly impracticable en-
 “ tirely to attain) would endeavour, as far as is in
 “ his power, to extirpate from his conversation,
 “ and the general tenor of his more private actions,
 “ certain ridiculous peculiarities which eminently
 “ mark his character.

“ If, for instance, I interrogate a friend of mine
 “ whether Miss ——— attended such a ball, and
 “ how she danced ? he instantly replies, “ *Indeed,*
 “ *Sir, she did attend; and danced, oh ! she danced like*
 “ *the very Devil!*” How, I again ask, was she dressed?
 “ *Oh ! she was dressed with peculiar elegance, out-*
 “ *shone the other beauties in the room, and looked as*
 “ *enchanting as the Devil.*” Whether his infernal
 “ majesty really possesses all the attributes my
 “ friend is pleased to ascribe to him or not,
 “ is not much to our purpose ; however, to the ge-
 “ nerality of his auditors I should rather suppose,
 “ that such an addition to most of the sentences he
 “ uttered,

“ uttered, would appear in a disadvantageous, rather than an ornamental light.

“ The same person (as if he was desirous early to accustom his body to the use of a coffin) would, I believe, rather forego his night’s rest, than sleep in a bed two inches broader than is absolutely necessary. Many other peculiarities time will not permit me to notice. I frequently threaten him with the certainty of his expiring an old batchelor; but I am convinced, that an hint from Mr. Griffin, will be far more efficacious towards the recovery of my friend, than the terrors of perpetual celibacy.

“ I am, Sir, &c.

“ Nov. 18, 1786.

“ MUSIDORUS.”

“ DEAR GREG,

“ YOU were in a plaguy hurry to fill up the vacant seat in the lounging club. I should have disputed the pretensions of Narcissus myself, and I am confident there is not a single member of our *non-chalance* society, but better deserved the distinction;—Hear, and judge
“ for

“ for yourself.—You must know we are a firm
“ CON, who regularly spend our Saturdays in re-
“ capitulating the business of the week, and the
“ lucky rogue who proves himself to have done
“ the *least* good, who has taken the most effectual
“ pains to evade every purpose of his education, to
“ affect indisposition with the greatest art, and loll
“ away his hours with the most perfect indolence;
“ is chosen PRESIDENT for the ensuing week;
“ with many privileges that I may possibly ac-
“ quaint you with hereafter.—The immediate
“ peals of applause that follow the promotion,
“ would do your heart good, and has made me take
“ more pains to arrive at the honor, than the clo-
“ sest attention to my education would have cost
“ me. I proved to the satisfaction of the whole
“ society last Saturday, that all the traces of my
“ abilities, discoverable for the last week, were
“ those before them on the chimney piece, from a
“ hot poker. What shouts of applause! and I was
“ actually hustled one foot into the chair, when
“ an unlucky member discovered, that I had taken
“ too much pains in burning the initial letters of
“ my name, and that they remained an *indelible*
“ proof against me. He sprung into the chair
“ with the unanimous voice of the whole club, for
“ it

“ it was proved in his favor, that in the whole
“ course of the week he had done nothing, except
“ indeed throwing a cravat into the fire, because it
“ had been ill washed, and was not brought the mo-
“ ment he ordered it. There was exertion in this,
“ added to some abuse he had given the servant,
“ and I voted to dispossess him ; but it appeared,
“ that his Tutor, with a mildness peculiar to him-
“ self, had taken great pains that very morning to
“ convince him of his errors ; that his idleness and
“ extravagance deeply distress’d an indulgent fa-
“ ther ; was ruin to the hopes of his whole family ;
“ and a melancholy waste of abilities that he might
“ some time lament, but never have the power to
“ retrieve. To this, and much more, dictated by
“ virtue and friendship, he turned an ear of *non-*
“ *chalance*, vow’d it was an excessive *bore*, flew to
“ the club, and sent for a new pair of buckles
“ three inches larger than the last. I roared my
“ consent to the promotion of such a jolly dog,
“ proof against the mildest dictates of reason ; the
“ strongest ties of gratitude and affection ; and the
“ necessity of that œconomy, which his situation
“ in life particularly demanded from him. I now
“ stand a candidate for the next week, and in the
“ name of all the powers of indolence, my dear

“ Greg, don't bring lounging into contempt, till
“ I have shared the honours of the society.

“ You have absolutely destroyed us by your rail-
“ lery against Swearing. It was a happy relief for
“ dullness, and supplied the want of information
“ upon every subject. I swore roundly on the cle-
“ verness of your first number, and had actually
“ practised a new and choice collection of execra-
“ tions to come out with the second; and when
“ our PRESIDENT read it, (a labour by the by,
“ that but for his unrivaled claims would have cost
“ him his place) I sat lounging with one leg care-
“ lessly thrown over my knee, patting the other;
“ with my new volley, as I may say, ready at my
“ fingers ends; but when he had finished, I could
“ not express a single syllable, and have not sworn
“ an oath since, without a sheepish kind of con-
“ sciousness, that destroys as it were the plump-
“ ness of utterance; and I verily believe, I shall
“ be reduced to the wretched alternative of feign-
“ ing myself totally dumb, or be at the pains of
“ acquiring some knowledge, to qualify myself for
“ conversation.

“ I

“ I was recovering the other day, and beginning
 “ to rap out an execration with a tolerable air of
 “ indifference, when a tall fellow tapped me on
 “ the shoulder, halloo’d *Microcosm* in my ear, and
 “ making me spring at least three feet from the
 “ ground, whirl’d my abortive oath to some at-
 “ tendant Spirit, who never let it drop in this
 “ world, and I hope will never record it in the
 “ next. But, for pity’s sake, my dear Greg, don’t
 “ be too virtuous ; leave us some vices to revel in ;
 “ for at the unmerciful rate you go on, lopping off
 “ a vice or a folly every week, we shall be the
 “ dullest seminary in Christendom ; we shall have
 “ nothing to do but study ; and I am sadly afraid
 “ it will become fashionable to be attentive, dili-
 “ gent, and healthy ;—for why attempt, by
 “ feigned sickness, to escape from scholastic tram-
 “ mels, if it is no longer *knowing to swear, lounge,*
 “ or in any shape to play the fool ?

“ Your’s,

Nov. 20, 1786.

“ OCTAVIUS.”

" *Eton, Monday, Nov. 27, 1786.*

" *To the MICROSCOPOLITAN.*

" *DEAR GRIF,*

" *BEING myself a sincere*
 " *admirer of your plan, and being willing, as far*
 " *as lay in my power to contribute to its success,*
 " *I have made it my business to collect the vari-*
 " *ous observations of your fellow-citizens on their*
 " *new Cenfor. I shall not detain you with the*
 " *many different conjectures concerning the mean-*
 " *ing, and true pronounciation of your title, suf-*
 " *fice it, there was not a word beginning with*
 " *the same letter, or any ways resembling it, ei-*
 " *ther in similarity of sound, or an equal number*
 " *of syllables, to which it was not supposed to*
 " *have some reference. Nor was the design itself,*
 " *and the concealment which the author affected,*
 " *less the subject of investigation. Morality, ri-*
 " *baldry, politics, poetry, panegyric, and per-*
 " *sonal invective, were by turns hinted at as the*
 " *materials of your lucubrations. With regard*
 " *to yourself, were I to mention to you all who*
 " *were supposed to lie hid under the name of*
 " *Gregory Griffin, I should seem to impose on your*
 " *credulity. Neither the vacant levity of the*
 " *idler, the solid stupidity of the blockhead, nor*
 " *the*

“ the harmless insignificance which distinguishes
“ the lifeless character of the *cypher*, secured
“ them from the imputation of GREGORI-
“ ANISM. Every body’s motions were watched
“ with a ridiculous attention ; the hapless being
“ who was discovered reading a manuscript of
“ any kind, gave rise to an immediate suspicion ;
“ and an unusual distention of the risible muscles
“ at the sight of the Microcosm, effectually
“ branded him with the name of *Authorling*. Nay,
“ even the innocent letters which composed the
“ name, (upon the idea of *Cabal and Smeetynnuus*)
“ were adjudged to the rack ; and like tortured
“ criminals, made to confess more than they knew.
“ Nor were there wanting some, who by shrewd
“ shrugs and sly innuendos, sagaciously intimated,
“ that tho’ they said nothing, *they knew what they*
“ *knew*. The beak and claws of the imaginary be-
“ ing, whose name the author had assumed, were
“ not supposed to be given him for nothing. And
“ many, the summit of whose ambition before
“ had been to pass thro’ life with comfortable se-
“ renity, now began to look upon themselves as
“ objects sufficiently dignified for satirical notice,
“ or hoped at least, to be lashed into importance
“ as the shadows of more distinguished offenders,

“without personally feeling the smart; as the
 “pillorying of his master reflects honour on the
 “printer’s devil, while he himself remains

———“*Sanus utrisque*

“*Auribus.*

“*His ears uncrepped.*

“I am, Sir,

“Your sincere well wisher,

“OBSERVATOR.”

NOTES to CORRESPONDENTS.

It is not consistent with my plan to insert the letter of **TELEMACHUS**; as to its publication in the London Papers, he is at liberty to use his pleasure.--I had unfortunately mislaid the letter of **ABSALOM THOUGHTFUL**, which prevented my inserting it as I intended. Whenever the hints he furnished me with shall appear, he may depend upon due acknowledgement.--My Female Correspondent, who signs herself **DOROTHY TEAR-SHEET**, as I am willing to believe her all that is fair and modest, *was not*, I should suppose, aware of the tendency of her signature.--**CÆMETERIUS** shall be attended to.

And now, having thus far prosecuted my undertaking, with a spirit of industry, inspired by an encouragement and applause far above my deserts, or my expectations, I must,
 for

for awhile, retire from the observation of the public. To my fellow-citizens I need make no apology for the temporary discontinuance of my labours; as the same event which causes that cessation, disperses them into different and distant parts of the kingdom, whither the works of the *Microcosmopolitan* could not be conveyed to them without a trouble and expence of which they are unworthy. Those of my readers who do not come under that denomination, will not, I hope, be offended at the pause I am thus necessitated to make, but will receive, with equal kindness and indulgence, my weekly lucubrations, from MONDAY, the 15th of *January* next, on which day they will be re-commenced, to be continued without further interruption.

P. S. During this interval, any letter (post paid) will reach the Author with the usual direction.

T H E
M I C R O C O S M.

No. VII.—MONDAY, January 15, 1787.

————— *Jocis,*
Ludoque dictus non Sat idoneus.—HORACE.

————— *Unfit*
For Sprightly Jokes, or sportive Wit.

‘TO GREGORY GRIFFIN, ESQ.

‘S I R,

✻✻✻✻ O discharge with faithfulness the duties
✻✻ ‘T ✻✻ ‘ of the important office which you have
✻✻ ✻✻ ✻✻ ‘ undertaken, you ought in my opinion
✻✻✻✻ ‘ to omit nothing which might be any ways con-
‘ ducive to the advantage or improvement of your
‘ fellow-citizens; to the advancement of their wel-
‘ fare, or the support of their dignity. Of this
‘ number

‘ number I have the honor to be one ; and by
‘ grounding a few remarks on the subject which I
‘ now offer to your consideration, you will confer
‘ a benefit not on me only, but on many others of
‘ the great as well as little world, who may labour
‘ under the same calamity.

‘ You must know, Mr. Griffin, that it is my
‘ hard hap to receive an annual invitation from an
‘ old gentleman, a distant relation of mine, to
‘ spend every Christmas at his Hall, in a North-
‘ ern County. This compliment I am never at
‘ liberty to refuse ; as his estate being very large,
‘ and himself too far advanced in life to give any
‘ apprehensions of matrimony, my family have
‘ built great hopes and expectations on his par-
‘ tiality for me. That you may understand the
‘ nature of my misfortunes, it is necessary to in-
‘ form you, that he is one of that race of men,
‘ called Country ‘Squires ; who having been de-
‘ prived of the advantages of a liberal education, by
‘ the foolish fondness of his parents, which occa-
‘ sioned them always to keep him in their sight,
‘ professes to hold *book-learning* in the greatest con-
‘ tempt. Hence he takes no small pleasure to
‘ overthrow the arguments advanced by the parson

‘ of the Parish in its favor, by alledging its inef-
‘ ficacy to enrich a man, which he exemplifies
‘ in the poverty of his opponent; and adds with a
‘ triumphant sneer, that “*if his learning would*
‘ *get him a good living, he would say something.*” In
‘ short, Sir, this talent of *Joking*, is the grievance
‘ of which I complain; for when the old gentleman
‘ is once in the humour, he is apt to be unmerci-
‘ fully waggish; an event which never fails to take
‘ place on the day of my arrival.

‘ I would you could see us, Mr. Griffin, as we
‘ sit round the table in the great hall; you might
‘ then possibly form some idea of my miserable
‘ situation.—It is necessary for your proper in-
‘ formation, to premise, that the company on that
‘ day always consists of the ‘Squire, with his feet
‘ in flannel; (the gout, like myself, usually paying
‘ its annual visit about this time;)—the parson of
‘ the parish, who is always invited to welcome
‘ me,—and two nieces of the ‘Squire, who have
‘ passed some years with him, not much to the ad-
‘ vantage of their education, and are dizen’d out
‘ on this occasion in all their finery.

‘ Having for several years been accustomed to sus-
‘ tain a very regular fire of wit all the first evening
‘ of

‘ of my arrival, and knowing from experience the
‘ order in which the jokes succeed each other, I
‘ can now nearly bear the battle without flinching.
‘ The first attack is made, as the parson terms it,
‘ *à posteriori*, by desiring a cushion to be brought
‘ for me to sit down upon ; one of his nieces, with
‘ a suitable grin on her countenance, enquires the
‘ reason, as in duty bound, for which she is re-
‘ ferred to me ; and on my protesting my igno-
‘ rance of it, the old gentleman’s right eye in-
‘ stantly assumes an arch leer at the company, while
‘ with a composed gravity he enquires of me,
‘ “ *Whether birch grows pretty plentifully about Eton?*”
‘ This question is immediately followed by an un-
‘ governable he ! he ! from the young ladies, and
‘ a fly “ *I warrant ye !*” from the parson. The
‘ Squire having for a time retained his gravity, at
‘ length, as if quite overcome by the force of his
‘ own wit, gives himself up to a loud and tu-
‘ multuous vociferation. This grand volley of
‘ wit, with the scattered small shot that follow,
‘ concerning, *Great home consumption of the Article ;*
‘ *Great demand for pickle, diachylon, &c. &c.* ge-
‘ nerally fills up the space before dinner. That
‘ joke indeed about the similitude of *our* arms to
‘ the American, namely *thirteen stripes*, did, the
‘ first

‘ first time of hearing, occasion me to laugh heartily ; the second recital provoked a smile ; but I am now grown so callous by dint of frequent repetition, that I can hear it without moving a muscle of my countenance.

‘ At dinner my troubles begin afresh. The very dishes are calculated to furnish out a set of witticisms. The leg of mutton he supposes he may help me to, as he dares to say that I never heard of any such thing at Eton ; the boiled fowls he conjectures to be too common food for me ; and he declares himself not without apprehensions, that I may find fault with the poorness of his wines, being accustomed to drink none but the choicest elsewhere. During the interval between the first and second course, it is easy to perceive that there has been some little plan concerted for my surprise or mortification. Every nose in company has a forefinger applied to it to enforce secrecy ; and every eye is fixed on my countenance, to enjoy the transports, which I am expected to discover at the entrance of a *plumb pudding* of immoderate size ; half of which is immediately transferred to my plate, accompanied with sundry wise cautions, to lose no
‘ time

‘ time and not to be too modest. While in my
‘ own defence, I am endeavouring to make away
‘ with some little portion of it, the Squire de-
‘ clares he thought he should surprise me ; and on
‘ my disclaiming any such surprise, an appeal is
‘ made to the rest of the company, by whom it is
‘ unanimously resolved, that, when the pudding
‘ made its appearance, I betrayed the strongest
‘ symptoms of rapturous admiration.

‘ Finding it in vain to contend, I now resign my
‘ self to my fate ;—nor long the time, before the
‘ old gentleman’s countenance begins to undergo
‘ various revolutions, which seem to prognosticate
‘ some stroke of uncommon pleasantry :—and at the
‘ appearance of a dish of pippins, I prepare myself
‘ with Christian patience for the *good story*, which
‘ I am assured I have never heard before,—name-
‘ ly, “ *a full and true account of his being caught in*
“ *Farmer Dobson’s Orchard, stealing, as it might be,*
“ *just such apples as these, when he was just about my*
“ *age.*”—It is now, Mr. Griffin, just fourteen years
‘ since I first heard this story ; and every one of
‘ the fourteen times of telling it, he has, with won-
‘ derful facility, adapted it to my comprehension,
‘ by contriving to be “ *just about my age*” when
‘ the

' the adventure happened. The tale being told,
 ' it is customary for one of his nieces to ask me in
 ' a whisper, "if I don't think him *monstrous* funny?"
 ' on my assenting to it, I am informed, that "*he*
 ' "*has some such comical stories I can't think, and*
 ' that "she will get him to tell me *how old Dixon*
 ' "*tricked the Londoner.*" Nor is it without an in-
 ' finite number of protestations, that I am able to
 ' make her sensible of my perfect acquaintance
 ' with all the circumstances of that notable history,
 ' and to dissuade her from a courtesy so super-
 ' fluous.

' After some short respite, I perceive the old
 ' gentleman begins to grow waggish again, and am
 ' soon desired to stand up and measure heights
 ' with the young ladies.—As I am some years older
 ' than they, I have been regularly found some
 ' inches taller every time of measurement; and
 ' this circumstance has, as regularly produced one
 ' wink of the 'Squire's right eye, and two several
 ' repetitions of the old proverb, that "*Ill weeds*
 ' "*grow apace.*"

' Next follows my examination by the parson,
 ' touching the proficiency which I have made;
 ' prefaced

‘ prefaced indeed by the ‘Squire’s declaring himself
‘ willing to wager any thing on *my knowing all*
‘ *about it as well as the best of them.* During the
‘ ceremony he usually falls asleep, and on
‘ waking takes the opportunity to have a fling at
‘ the parson, by asking significantly “whether I
‘ am too *hard for him?*”

‘ But in short, Mr. Griffin, I lament my inability
‘ to give you a perfect idea of this character,
‘ which however I am persuaded is not very uncommon.
‘ There are, no doubt, many, who in
‘ the same manner, aim at the reputation of *Wits*,
‘ without any advantages either of natural abilities,
‘ or acquired understanding. On such as
‘ these I could wish you to bestow some advice,
‘ for the correction of their ignorant pretensions,
‘ and the amendment of their erroneous opinions.
‘ These are the people most apt to indulge their
‘ satirical humour at the expence of your fellow-
‘ citizens, whose honour and credit it is your duty
‘ to defend against every calumniatory imputation.
‘ Tell then these good people, how widely
‘ mistaken they are in supposing, that the mind
‘ of youth, like the vegetation of the wallnut-tree,
‘ is quickened by blows in its advances to maturity.

' rity. Tell them, that the waters of Helicon do
' not flow with *brine* ; nor are the laurel and the
' birch so intimately interwoven in the chaplets of
' the Muses, as they are willing to believe. Tell
' them also, that an increase of *knowledge* does not
' necessarily bring with it a proportionable increase
' of *appetite* ; and that the being able to read a
' Roman Author with facility, does not justify
' the supposition of an immoderate desire for
' *toast and butter*, and an insatiable craving for
' *plumb-pudding*. Remind them, that these, and all
' similar Jokes which they are pleased to make use
' of on these occasions, have been made the same
' use of at least fifty times before. Advise them to
' reflect how often they themselves, on the same
' subjects, at stated opportunities, have reiterated
' those regular bon mots and trite conceits ; how
' often given vent to the same strain of annual wag-
' gery, to the same sallies of periodical facetious-
' ness. And let them know, that as they have but
' little to boast of on the score of novelty, they have
' as little on that of humour. If on the re-
' petition of their witticisms, a grin takes posses-
' sion, of the countenance of their auditors, warn
' them that they mistake not the sneer of ridicule
' for the smile of approbation ; and hint to them,
' that

‘that tho’, by the respect or diffidence of those
‘at whose expence it pleases them to be merry,
‘they may be secured from being rendered open-
‘ly ridiculous; they may still be liable and likely
‘to become secretly contemptible.

‘I am, Sir,

‘Your’s, &c. &c.

The grievance of which my correspondent complains, is well worthy of being attended to, nor had it indeed escaped my notice; but he has placed his subject in so proper a light, that to dilate on it farther would be totally superfluous.—I shall therefore only venture to throw together some observations of a more general kind.

It is with men of their wit, as with women of their beauty :—Tell a woman she is fair, and she will not be offended that you tell her she is cruel. Tell a man that he is a wit, and if you lay to his charge ill-nature or blasphemy, he will take it as a compliment rather than a reproach. Thus too, there is no woman but lays some claim to beauty; and no man that will give up his pretensions to wit. In cases of this kind therefore, where so much depends upon opinion, and where every
man

man thinks himself qualified to be his own judge, there is nothing to a reader so useless as illustration; and nothing to an author so dangerous as definition. Any attempt therefore to decide what true WIT is, must be ineffectual; as not one in a hundred would be content to abide by the decision: it is impossible to rank all mankind under the name of wits, and there is scarce one in a hundred who does not think that he merits the appellation.

Hence it is that every one, how little qualified soever, is fond of making a display of his fancied abilities; and generally at the expence of some one to whom he supposes himself infinitely superior. And from this supposition many mistakes arise to those who commence wags, with a very small share of wit, and a still smaller of judgment; whose imaginations are by nature unprolific, and whose minds are uncultivated by education. These persons, while they are ringing their rounds on a few dull jests, are apt to mistake the rude and noisy merriment of illiterate jocularity, for genuine humour. They often unhappily conceive, that those laugh *with* them, who laugh *at* them. The sarcasms which every one disdains to answer, they vainly

vainly flatter themselves are unanswerable; forgetting, no doubt, that their *good things* are unworthy the notice of a Retort, and below the condescension of Criticism. They know not perhaps that the Afs, whom the fable represents as assuming the playfulness of the lap-dog, is a perfect picture of jocular stupidity; and that in like manner, that awkward absurdity of waggishness, which they expect should delight, cannot but disgust; and instead of laying claim to admiration, must insure contempt.

But, alas! I am aware that mine will prove a successful undertaking; and that, tho' knight-errand like I sally forth to engage with the Monsters of Witticism and Wagery, all my prowess will be inadequate to the achievement of the enterprize. The world will continue as facetious as ever in spite of all I can do; and people will be just as fond of their "little jokes and old stories," as if I had never combatted their inclination.

Since then I cannot utterly extirpate this unchristian practice, my next endeavour must be, to direct it properly, and improve it by some wholesome regulations.—And herein shall I imitate his
most

most Christian Majesty, who by licensing a limited number of brothel houses, restricted an evil which he never could entirely have suppressed ; prevented many of the ill consequences which naturally arise from promiscuous libertinism ; and drew moreover from the profits no very inconsiderable revenue ; thus, from the folly of individuals deriving advantage to the community. Equally advantageous to the public, and equally profitable to myself, will be the plan which I have laid down ; and which I have already bestowed some pains to bring to perfection. I propose, if I meet with proper encouragement, making application to parliament for permission to open "A LICENCED WAREHOUSE FOR WIT," and for a Patent, entitling me to the sole vending and uttering Wares of this kind, for a certain term of years. For this purpose, I have already laid in *Jokes, Jests, Wit-ticisms, Morceaux, and Ban-Mots* of every kind, to a very considerable amount, well worthy the attention of the public. I have *Epigrams*, that want nothing but the sting ; *Conundrums*, that need nothing but an explanation ; *Rebusses* and *Acrostics*, that will be complete with the addition of the name only. These being in great request, may be had at an hour's warning. *Impromptu's* will be got ready

ready at a week's notice. For common and vernacular use, I have a long list of the most palpable *Puns* in the language, digested in Alphabetical order;—for these I expect good sale at both the universities.—*Jokes* of all kinds ready cut and dry. N. B. Proper allowance made to gentlemen of the law going on circuit; and to all second-hand vendors of wit and retailers of repartee, who take large quantities. N. B. *Attic Salt* in any quantity.—N. B. Most money given for old *Jokes*.

B.

THE

T H E
M I C R O C O S M.


No. VIII.—MONDAY, January 22, 1787

*Majorum primus quisquis fuit ille tuorum
Aut pastor fuit, aut illud quod dicere nols.*

JUVENAL.

————— *Your honour's ancient source
Was a poor shepherd's boy, or something worse.*

DRYDEN,

URNING over the other day some manuscripts belonging to the Griffin family, I accidentally cast my eyes on a parchment roll, carefully sealed, and inscribed "The Pedigree." Not having before considered that I was entitled to any ancestry, I began to feel an increased consequence, as I opened this sacred testimony of my being a son of Adam; and was elated or depressed, according to the titles or occupations of my grand-fathers from time immemorial.

I will not, courteous reader, detain thee with the honorable mention made of my family by bards of old; how, for instance, one of them being inspector of the gardens to a foreign potentate, was overdosed by one Hercules, who in the mean while robbed an orchard of certain golden-pippins:—how, afterwards, upon my ancestor's waking, he claimed them by right of discovery, and in farther proof of such right, most valiantly did beat his brains about his ears. How, another being appointed guardian of a woollen manufactory, was lulled to sleep by a certain adventurer from across the seas, who by that means stole his golden fleece; (no impeachment on the sagacity or vigilance of my ancestor,) the same spark having previously imposed on a wild and fiery bull who kept a mighty coil, and by putting a yoke on his neck subjected him to his own convenience. These, reader, I say, I will not detain thee with; but as I propose to make my after reflections on this parchment, the subject of this paper, shall proceed to them without farther preamble.

Pride, says the old Castilian, is that principle, which from a consciousness of inborn superiority, sets a man above the weaknesses of human nature;
in

in prosperity enables him to preserve that dignity which his situation demands; and prevents him in adversity from consenting to any thing which might be derogatory to the principles of a man of honor. These, probably, or nearly these, are the ideas not of a patriotic but provincial bigot; but this is far from being a true definition of pride: and not only theoretical supposition, but practical observation, will daily enable us in some measure to controvert this reasoning. In order to reduce our enquiry as near the truth as possible, let us, by placing the arguments of opposite prejudice in equal balances, suppose, as is generally the case, that a fair and candid decision will lay in the midway between them.

Pride, says the more polished, and of consequence less prejudiced man of the world, who has not had the honour to have been born on the other side of the Pyrenees, is a false principle of honor, seeking its gratification in the abject submission of others, and refining to extravagant punctilio and constrained resentment, that, which should only proceed from the genuine and lively emotions of the soul. It is a deformity of the mind, which subjects its possessor not only to the
ridicule

ridicule of all around him, but to infinite mortification on the failure of that respect which he considers as due to his superior merit; a mortification, which as few others view him in the same light, he must be frequently subjected to.

Though these principles are in all respects diametrically opposite, each of them have a specious appearance of truth. By tempering therefore each with the other, are we most likely to prove, whether pride is a principle to be cherished in the human heart or no. That pride, for instance, which when moderately indulged, fires a man with a just and noble resentment for wrongs received, when carried farther, degenerates into punctilio. That which prevents a man from condescending to any thing unworthy himself, is a laudable principle; but when any thing a degree below his expectation or wishes is interpreted into an unworthy occupation, it becomes a folly. As to the mortifications a man draws on himself, by an intemperate indulgence of this failing, it must be allowed, that the poison is in that respect its own antidote; and a mind so impregnated, is at least equal to supporting the ridicule which is levelled against it. Pride in short is of two kinds, defensive and of-

defensive. While only defensive, it is far from being *offensive*, and serves as a sword in the scabbard, which though harmless at the moment, protects the wearer from insult ; when offensive, it is an attack on the rest of mankind, which calls for every one's exertions to repel it.

But I seem to be straying from my motto, which, as I am more particularly on the subject of family pride, calls on me to prove the descent of all our noble houses from shepherds, or what, as the poet sings, “ I am ashamed to say.” As in a former paper I invited my readers to a melancholy prospect in the terra incognita of probabilities ; so will I now present them with a full as unflattering a retrospect in the terra firma of History.

Mankind are obliged to the so much talked of Golden age, in no other respect than for the quantity of harmonious ditties it has produced ; and the pretty allusions concerning hanging woods, purling streams, the social intercourse of man and sheep, the great conveniency which swains of those days used to experience in their extraordinary powers of abstinence, &c. &c. which it has
from

from time immemorial, and still continues to furnish to Arcadian Garretteers. So far indeed was any age from being preexistent to the iron, that the first crime committed by man, was a violation of the express law of God; the second of that of God and nature. From that time forward, particular facts, which prove that Antediluvian is no word to be applied to any thing over religious, are too numerous to dwell on. Suffice it to say, that the history of our right worshipful grandfathers, both before and since the flood, does not at all tend to strengthen the opinion of the poet.

*Ætas parentum pejor avis tulit
Nos nequiores, mox daturos
Progeniem vitiosiore.*—HOR.

*More vicious than their father's age
Our sires begot the present race
Of actions impious, bold, and base;
And yet with crimes to us unknown,
Our sons shall make the coming age their own.*

FRANCIS.

The conquest, wealth, luxury, and from thence the decline of commonwealths, have in all ages

been the theme as well of the Moralist as the Historian ; these therefore let us pass by, and by looking back so far only as to the first population of this Island, consider, whether the motto is not as applicable to the family pride of a true born Briton, as that of a Roman Citizen.

Notwithstanding the comfortable assertions of those ingenious gentlemen who wish to derive us from the illustrious race of Troy, our vicinity to the Continent pleads hard for our being neither more or less than the descendants of a few shipwrecked fishermen ; or what is worse, some light footed heroes, who preferred the chance of escaping by sea, to the certainty of hanging on shore. Nor has this stock been much mended by the exotic shoots which have from time to time been ingrafted on it : Such as the Romans, our first invaders, from whom, I believe, many genealogists of the present day pretend to derive their origin ; though it scarce seems probable, that a people who had more pride of birth than any other, would have consented to forego their country and friends, in order to settle among a race of barbarians ; unless perhaps some few who
were

were not in the Cenfor's list, and therefore in fact no Romans, or some chance deserters, who took refuge among the natives to avoid military discipline. The Danes, a wretched band of adventurers, whose ferocity was their only distinguishing characteristic; whose only motive for forsaking their own country was poverty, and whose only view in invading Britain was plunder: The Saxons, in themselves a brave and antient nation, but happily at that time delivered of their own ruffians in the persons of our conquerors: Last of all the Normans, under the command of a bastard, put a finishing blow to the contentions of foreign powers for the possession of this unhappy island; and compleated a mixture of bravoës, differing in their manners and interests, each (as not being attached to one head by any principles of loyalty and affection) naturally endeavouring to advance his own partizans; and smothering that jealousy from constraint, which only waited for an opportunity to burst into a flame.

From this engaging portrait of our forefathers, a Chinese Philosopher would be led to suppose, that the antiquity of a British family was its great-

est stain. But so far is this from being the case, that even in this miniature picture of mankind, family pride is no inconsiderable feature; and some there are, who though their only merit lies in a crowded vault, from that single distinction consider themselves as infinitely superior to those *men of Yesterday*, whose meritorious exertions evince them to be rather ambitious of founding, than boasting a noble family. But from a probable supposition that this extravagant principle can only have taken root in the minds of those from whom it is impossible to eradicate it, let us proceed to that family pride, which has at first a more specious appearance, and if ingrafted on notions naturally virtuous, is more likely to produce good effects; that, I mean, which boasts not so much the antiquity as eminence of its family. Even this, however, though to a noble mind it is an additional incentive to great and glorious actions, if it happens to be cherished by a wicked or even a passive disposition, will be found to be equally ridiculous with the other.

If the good qualities of mankind were like those of cattle, hereditary, a virtuous ancestry would

would be the most desirable possession a man could receive from inheritance ; but if experience teaches us that they so seldom are, if from the adulation with which men of family and fortune are generally from their infancy surrounded, it is very improbable that they should be oftener virtuous, what does a man derive from a noble family ; unless, that by the profusion of light in the background, the shade in front is more effectually exposed. To those few therefore, to those chosen few, who consider that a noble family reflects either honor or disgrace only according to the use made of it by themselves ; who reflect, that it is nothing more than a splendid burthen, an additional tax on them, to add one more to the distinguished list, to them may a degree of family pride be considered as an advantage: And among those, our little world may boast of having ushered no inconsiderable share into the larger theatre of life ; who have since distinguished themselves as good and great men. Nor in any other respect does a public education so much evince its superiority, as in the equitable treatment our citizens receive from each other ; and which, says Dr. Moore, “ often serves as an antidote against the

“childish sophistical notions with which weak or
“designing men endeavour to inspire them in af-
“ter life.”

C.

NOTES. to CORRESPONDENTS.

NO NOVELIST, Two SENEX's, and the COUNTRY GIRL are received. The latter has a full right to the *indulgence* she desires, and will much oblige me by her future correspondence. I am very loth to refuse any thing to so fair a petitioner, as I take it for granted MATRONA is, and grieve that it is not in my power to accept her invitation at present, and oblige her by the interview which she solicits. In any thing else she may command me.

T H E

M I C R O C O S M.

No. IX.—MONDAY, *January 29, 1787.*

Sit quodvis simplex dumtaxat & unum.

Be what you will so you be still the same.—Rosc.

✻✻✻✻ HERE are few precepts, dictated
✻ T ✻ like the above, by judgment and ex-
✻✻✻✻ perience, which, though originally
confined to a particular application (as this to
the formation of Dramatic character) may
not be adopted with success in the several
branches of the same science, and even trans-
ferred into another. The direction which the
poet gives us here, to preserve a regard for sim-
plicity and uniformity, may be applied to the
general design and main structure of a poem; and,
if we allow them a still greater latitude of inter-
pretation, may be found to convey a very useful

rule with respect to the inferior component parts which constitute a work.

A venerable pile of Gothic architecture, viewed at a distance, or after the sober hand of time has stripped it of the false glare of meretricious ornament, communicates a sensation which the same object under a closer inspection in its highest degree of perfection, was incapable of producing; when the attention, solicited by a thousand minutiae with which the hand of caprice and superstition had crowded its object, was unavoidably diverted from the contemplation of the main design.

In all points which admit of hesitation, the sister sciences are found to throw a corresponding lustre on each other. The impropriety of admitting ill-judged ornament, though connected as in the above instance with all that is awful and venerable, must be evident to the most superficial observer; and this circumstance should lead us to conjecture, that the same principle existed in a similar tho' superior science. Originality of sentiment, vivacity of thought, and loftiness of language may conduct the reader to the end of a
work,

work, tho' awkwardly designed and injudiciously constructed; while the nicest adherence to poetic rule would be found insufficient to compensate for meanness of thought, or vulgarity of expression. That these two faults should infallibly destroy all title which any writer might otherwise have to the name of poet, should seem self-evident, and yet a fault which appears to be a composition of them both, has, I think, in some instances past without reprehension, I mean allusion to local circumstance: I shall therefore make this paper the vehicle of a few observations on this practice.

Nothing can be more directly adverse to the spirit of poetry, considered under one of its definitions as an universal language, than whatever confines it to the comprehension of a single people, or a particular period of time.

Blackmore, a name now grown to a bye word in criticism, in the original structure of his poem, was little, if at all, inferior to the great prototypes of antiquity; but that simplicity and uniformity so visible in the first design, was in every other respect conformably to the taste of his time, violated and neglected. It is said, that the most desolate

solate deserts of Africa are distinguished by little insulated spots, cloathed with perpetual verdure; and it sometimes happens, that beautiful passages present themselves in the Prince Arthur, as in the first book,

*The heavens serenely smil'd, and every sail,
Fill'd its broad bosom with the indulgent gale.*

But when lines like these occur, we must consider it, to borrow an expression from a contemporary Poet,—a gift no less

“Than that of manna in the Wilderness.”

Scriptural allusions like the foregoing, were much in fashion among the Poets of that period; and in this particular, so earnest a follower of it was not to be left behind: he has accordingly introduced his enchanter, Merlin, building seven altars, offering upon each a bullock and a ram, and attempting to curse the army of the hero, in imitation of Balaam, and with the same success.

Dryden himself is strongly tinctured with the taste of the times; and those *Dalilabs of the Town*, to use his own expression, are plentifully scattered throughout

throughout his works, esteemed in the present age for those passages only in which he ventured to oppose his own taste to that of his readers, and which have already past the ordeal of unmerited censure.

Nor is that narrowness of conception which confines a work to the comprehension of a particular portion of individuals, less reprehensible or less repugnant to the essential principles of poetry; and of this defect innumerable instances occur in both the authors above cited, with this difference, that in one instance we contemplate with regret the situation of an eminent genius constrained by his exigences to postpone the powers of his own taste, and submit his judgment to the arbitrary dominion of a prevailing mode; while in the other, we view with indifference, an author, spoilt indeed by the taste of the times in which he lived, but who, had he not adopted their's, had most probably succeeded as ill by following his own. Nothing is so common, as in both these writers to meet with expressions and allusions drawn from the meanest mechanical employments; at present infinitely disgusting to the general scholar, and (a proof of the necessity of observing the rule we have

have endeavoured to illustrate) to a foreigner, acquainted only with the learned part of our language, entirely unintelligible*.

In the earlier stages of civilization, while the bonds of society hang yet loose upon the individual, before the benefits of mutual assistance and dependence are felt or understood, the savage, elate with the idea of absolute independence, and unacquainted with all the advantages which accompany the arts of society, looks down with supreme contempt on a state, whose every individual is entirely dependent upon and connected with the community||. The wretched Esquimaux give themselves the exclusive title of *men*, and the Indian of North America, bestows on the Europeans, as compared with himself, the epithet of the *accursed race*.

In a state of absolute barbarism the arts of life are few, and agreeably to that all-sufficiency which the-

* I would not here be understood to hint at any similarity in the original genius of these authors; were I to draw the line of affinity, I should call Blackmore the caricatura of Dryden.

|| Robertson's History of America, Book IV.

the savage so much affects, practised and understood by each individual. The Indian, unacquainted with the arts of polished life, is to himself, what society is to the members which compose it: he raises himself the roof of his humble hut, and ventures upon the ocean in the canoe which his own hands have hollowed; his weapons for war or for the chase are such as his own industry, or sometimes a casual intercourse with politer nations, have furnished for him*. The component members of barbarous societies are seldom numerous, owing to the extreme difficulty which attends the education of infancy among the hazards and hardships of savage life, and join'd to it produces that extreme tenderness which all uncivilized communities entertain for the life of an individual. Were the numbers are comparatively few, the principle of patriotism is concentrated—the loss or misconduct of a North American Indian would be more sensibly felt by his tribe, than that of a thousand Englishmen by the parent country.

It remains, after a consideration of the causes, to trace their effects in the artless essays of the
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* Robertson's History of America, Book IV.

more remote periods. Ossian's poems, if allowed to be authentic, are the only specimen of this species generally known; Homer, being, according to the testimony of Aristotle, posterior to a long line of poets, his predecessors and perhaps his patterns: the decided preference given thro' every poem, to the nation, the family, and person of the poet, strongly mark the national character as well as that of the times. Allusions to the inferior arts are so unusual and so simple as must speak them in their first period of progression; or evince a taste and judgment in the author far beyond the times in which he is supposed to have flourished. He is himself, agreeably to that idea of self-importance, the invariable attendant on savage life, the hero of his own tale. Filial duty, and a regard to the merits of an illustrious warrior, might contribute to give Fingal a conspicuous character in poems, the productions of his son; but no reason can be given why Ossian, the *bard of song*, should be the hero of it. "The Battle", says Regnor Lodbrog, a prince, pirate, and poet of a succeeding age, "is grateful to me as the smile of a virgin in the bloom of youth; as the kiss of a young widow in a retired apartment." An egotism which moderns

moderns must suppose agreeable to the character of those times.—The pride of family, a prevailing passion where arts and commerce have not set mankind on a level, was indulged by the poet; who comprised in his profession that of the genealogist. Homer frequently traced the descent of his heroes into remote and fabulous antiquity; probably with a view to gratify such of his patrons as piqued themselves on their pedigree.

The poetry of ruder ages is seldom distinguished for elegance of diction or variety of imagery; yet there are advantages so strongly peculiar to it, as must raise it high in the esteem of all admirers of nature, while yet simple and unsophisticated. The state of the arts, as yet rude and imperfect, renders it impossible to deviate from simplicity. The distinctions of property being as yet faintly delineated, no idea of superiority can obtain but what arises from personal qualifications; and poetic praise, unprostituted to power and wealth, must be the genuine tribute of gratitude and admiration. That property was in a very unsettled state in the days of Homer, may be gathered from numberless passages in his writings; among the calamities which awaited an aged father on the death

death of his only son, the plunder of his possessions is mentioned; and Achilles laments, that life, unlike every other human possession, was not to be obtained by theft. Accordingly in the epithets which accompany the name of each hero, through the Iliad and Odyssey, we see no allusions to the adventitious circumstances of wealth and power, if we except the title of *lord of rich Mycenæ* sometimes, though rarely bestowed on Agamemnon. While the subtlety of Ulysses, the swiftness of Achilles, the courage and strength of Diomed, are mentioned as often as the names of those Heroes occur.

The intermediate step between barbarity and perfection, is perhaps the least favorable to the cultivation of poetry; for the *necessity* of writing with simplicity is taken away long before its *beauty* is discovered or attended to. The arts, if we may believe the picture of them, as exhibited in the shield of Achilles, had attained this intermediate stage of their progress in the days of Homer; and accordingly we find in the works of that great master, some allusions to the meaner arts, as well as illustrations drawn from them; which,

which, however the antiquary might regard as throwing light on so remote a period, criticism must reject as repugnant to that simplicity and universality which form the essential characteristics of poetry. When Hector tells Paris that he deserved *a coat of stone*, i. e. to be stoned to death, I cannot help suspecting it to have been a cant word of that time; and am rather disgusted than satisfied, to find the security which Neptune gives for Mars, was agreeable to the form of procedure in the Athenian courts. Though in this instance a modern, and especially a modern of this Country, may be easily prejudiced; the laws here, by the uncouthness of their language, and other numberless particularities, wearing an air of ridicule by no means connected with the idea of laws in general. Yet, whatever allowances we admit in consideration of the distant period which produced this patriarch of poetry and literature, and however we abstract ourselves from the prevailing prejudices of modern manners, we still find ourselves better pleased with those images, which, from their simplicity in so long a period, have undergone the smallest variation. The following lines are perhaps the most

most pleasing to a modern reader of any in the whole Iliad.

*What time in some sequestered vale,
The weary woodman spreads his sparing meal;
When his tir'd arms refuse the axe to rear,
And claim a respite from the sylvan war;
But not till half the prostrate forest lay,
Stretch'd in long ruin, and expos'd to day.—POPE.*

And it is a curious consideration, that in a period which has exhausted the variety of wealth and vanity, the simple life of the labourer has not undergone the most trifling alteration. Milton, a strict observer as well as a constant imitator of the antients, has adopted the same idea in the following lines,

*What time the labour'd ox,
With loosen'd traces from the furrow came,
And the swink'd hedger at his supper sat.*

The father of English poetry, like that of the Grecian, lived in a period little favourable to simplicity in poetry; and several meannesses occur throughout his works, which in an age more refined,

fin'd, or more barbarous, he must have avoided.
We see among the *worthie* acts of *Duke Theseus*,

*How he took the nobil cite after,
And brent the walls and tore down roof and rafter.*

And, among the horrid Images which crowd
the temple of Mars,

*The child stranglid in the cradil,
The coke scaldid for alle his long ladil.*

That state of equipoise between horror and laughter, which the mind must here experience, may be ranked among its most unpleasing sensations.—The period at which the arts attain to their highest degree of perfection, may be esteemed more favourable to the productions of the Muses, than either of the foregoing; the mind is indulged in free retrospect of antiquity, and sometimes in conjectural glimpses of futurity; with such a field open before him, the objects which we must suppose should more immediately attract the attention of the poet, would be the failure or success of his predecessors; and the causes to which either was to be attributed. Pope has fully avail'd himself of the dear-bought experience of all who went
before

before him ; there is perhaps no poet more entirely free from this failing. I shall however only cite one instance in which he may seem to have carried his regard for simplicity so far, as to shew himself guilty of inaccuracy and inattention.

*The hungry judges now the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jury-men may dine.*

That judges in England never *sign* a sentence is well known ; and hunger, whatever effect it might have had on the jury-men of antient days, with those of modern times seems to operate rather as an incitement to mercy.—*Clifden's proud alcove* has not at present, and probably never had, any existence ; but the fault, if any there is, seems rather that of the language than of the poet : or perhaps, after all, it was mere penury of rhyme, and a distress similar to that which made him in another place hunt his poor dab-chick into *a copse* where it was never seen but in the *Dunciad*.

After so much said on the subject of local allusions, and terms of art, it cannot but occur to me, that I have myself sometimes fallen into the error which I have here reprehended, and adopted
phrases

phrases and expressions unintelligible, except to the little circle to which my labours were at first confined; an error I shall cautiously avoid for the future: for how little claim soever the lucubrations of GREGORY GRIFFIN may have to public notice, or a protracted term of existence, he is unwilling to abridge either by wilful continuance in an acknowledged error.

D

T H E
M I C R O C O S M.

No. X.—MONDAY, February 5, 1787.

*Et silicis venis abstrusum, excuderet ignem — VIRG.
And struck the imprison'd spark from veins of Stone.*

✱✱✱✱✱ MANKIND in general, when they con-
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✱✱✱✱✱ ✱✱✱✱✱ for Patriotism, Philosophy, Poetry,
or any other qualities which entitle them to
immortality, are inclined to complain of the
dearth of abilities and paucity of true Genius
observable in all ages. Genius, exclaims the
discontented complainant, is given but with a
sparing hand ; instead of moving in a regular orbit
as the Planet, its Course is lawless as the Comet's ;
instead of diffusing the permanent rays of the Sun,
it glitters only with the dazzling glare of the
lightning ; it is quick and transitory, and like the
Phoenix, appears not once in a century.—Such is
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the usual outcry of those, who love to turn good into evil ; to depreciate the dignity of man, and undervalue the works of their creator. The arguments by which they support this hypothesis are plausible ; they observe, that illustrious men have generally flourished not in a continued series, when the loss of one was supplied by a successor equally capable ; but in a collective body. After their demise, nature, as exhausted by such an unusual effort, has sunk into a lethargy, and slept for ages. These Sons of Fame, like the brighter constellations of the Heavens, obscure by their superior splendor the infinite hosts of Stars which are scattered through the regions of endless space. To establish this position, they instance the noted reigns of Augustus, Charles, Ann, and Louis. The respectable names of Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Tibullus, Propertius, Livy, and the other glories of this learned age are produced : Milton, Dryden, Tillotson, and Clarendon, with Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, Bolingbroke, Addison, Corneille, Racine, and Moliere, seem to corroborate this assertion. But let us examine with impartiality, and the deception will be detected. Can we suppose, that nature has scattered her blessings with more profusion to one age than

Vol. I. G another ;

another; or, that like an unfeeling step-mother, she has robbed one child of its portion to enrich the other? Rather has not the universality of her influence been equally extended to all? Whence then, it is required, whence originates that inequality of Genius and Learning, which is so incontrovertibly conspicuous in the annals of History? The answer is brief, from the difference of cultivation: The most fertile fields will, if neglected, be overrun with weeds; and the bramble will choak the luxuriance of the floweret. How many neglected spots are concealed in the wilds of Africa; how many tracts, seemingly oppressed with the curse of sterility, have, by the assistance of art, teemed with the fruits of cultivation. The human mind is that luxuriant field, rich in the gifts of nature; but requiring the fostering care of education, to raise the imperfect seed to the maturity of the full grown crop.

I will venture to affirm, that neither the dark ages of the latter Roman Empire, nor the darker ones which succeeded, (the period when human nature was at its lowest ebb, and had relapsed into the barbarism from which the superior wisdom of the first race of man had raised it) were deficient in

in Genius, if opportunity had called forth its powers. Statius and Claudian undoubtedly possessed the fire so requisite to form the poet ; and the excellent Boethius, martyred by the cruel policy of the imperial court, was born to grace a more splendid æra. To descend still deeper into this region of darkness, even so late as the closing years of the Greek Empire, the Princess Anna Comnena, to the eminence of her illustrious birth, joined the milder glories of Arts and Literature. Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and the other Schoolmen shew an acuteness of reason, and comprehension of mind, employed indeed on subtle niceties and frivolous distinctions ; but which, under the direction of a better taste, might have explored the profoundest depths of true Philosophy. The Rosicrucians, with other chemical projectors, in the course of an extravagant search after an imaginary Menstruum, stumbled on many useful discoveries in that curious science. Pope Silvester, with his illustrious follower, Friar Bacon, who were for their extraordinary knowledge deemed Magicians by the ignorant multitude, and who were both, for the honour of our nation, Englishmen, directing their studies to the proper ends of Philosophy, were the harbingers of that glorious

light which has since blazed out. Charlemagne and Alfred are characters which might dignify the annals of any Historian, as Warriors and Legislators; the first softened the rigours of the feudal system so peculiarly adapted to bind mankind in indissoluble chains; the other blessed his native land with liberty, and laid the first foundations of that constitution, which has since proved the envy and admiration of Europe. These few illustrious names, which are the sole ornaments of so many ages only feebly enlightened, were not able to dispel the surrounding clouds; their rays, scattered through such an extensive space, only served to make

“Darkness visible,”

and when the poet exclaimed

“Sint Mæcænates, non deerunt Flacce, Marones,”

Let Sheffield’s smile and Dryden’s still shall writ

he asserted that, to which experience has since given the sanction of Truth.

It is not to be doubted, but that many a man, whose powers of mind might have carried him to the highest pitch of human glory, has languished in obscurity for want of those opportunities, or that patronage, which calls forth the powers of
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the soul. Those few to whom their better fortune has granted this envied lot, sufficiently prove this position; and many of the most excellent of the latter Roman Emperors, left the more humble roofs of their native cottages, for the splendid magnificence of the imperial palace..

But the land of liberty is the soil favorable to the rearing these latent seeds; and it has been observed, that tho' Genius may flourish awhile under the exotic warmth of arbitrary power, its blossom is but perishable: it languishes under the nipping blasts of oppression; and pines for the more congenial Sun of Freedom. The iron sway of slavery crushes the soul as well as body.

*Animum quoque prægravat una,
Atque affigit humo divinæ particulam auræ.*

*Weights down the portion of celestial birth,
The breath of God, and fixes it to Earth.*—FRANCIS.

That I may not seem to assert an improbability, let us examine the different states of literature in the commonwealths of Greece and Rome, under the dominion of the Cæsars. An objection is now easily started, viz. that the Augustan age is the great æra of Roman Literature; and that under

the commonwealth the advances towards the politer arts were slow and difficult. The fact is, that the Romans, during the first centuries, were too deeply engaged in their foreign and domestic wars, to attend to the milder occupations of Peace. Self-preservation naturally engages the attention of man, prior to all other considerations; when that is secured, he has leisure to look around him, and make his first attempts in the Sciences. In the earlier, rude, and martial times the Trumpet drowned the notes of the Lyre; in those times therefore, the Genius most suitable to the age, shone with distinguished lustre; this was the age of Patriotism and Conquest, and military merit was the only certain road to the dignities of the Republic. When Rome was subjected to Cæsar, her Empire extended over the then known world. The Grecian elegance had softened her rougher Genius; and Science had polished the ferocity of her manners. The laurel of conquest faded before the olive of peace; and literary merit became the object of attention. Augustus only established that of which others had laid the foundations; Ennius, Terence, Lucretius, Catullus, and Sallust were prior to him; and the Roman eloquence, which
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was born, and which died with Cicero, sunk under the malignity of his influence. It is worth remarking, that tho' the Augustan age produced the best Poets, yet Eloquence fled with Freedom; after the death of Cicero she degenerated from her purer strains, into the laboured phrases of affected declamation. Poetry, which is so noted for its suppleness, flourished only for a few years; and probably owed its temporary vigour to the mean prostitution of its talents, in flattering the Enslaver of his Country, and the Tyrant of the World.

Greece on the contrary produced a continued series of great and learned men; she was not like Rome, forced to struggle for her liberty and existence against the jealousy of surrounding states. After the decisive battles of Marathon, Platæa, and Salamis, her internal dissensions were her only enemies; but even these promoted rather than impeded the powers of her Genius. To the Peloponnesian war we owe the history of Thucydides, the funeral orations of Pericles and Plato, and to the treachery of Philip the sublime invectives of Demosthenes; but when the conquering Eagle of Rome, under the pretence of protecting, enslaved the country, from that moment her Genius withered;

thered; and the only writers she afterwards produced, Polybius in particular, instead of recording the glories of their native country, celebrated the exploits of Rome. Rome therefore, now the uncontrouled Mistress of the world, was expected to excel in arts as well as arms; under Augustus, as before observed, she flourished for a time, but under the succeeding Emperors she relapsed into the ignorance, tho' she possessed not the virtues of the Consular State. The feeble efforts which Learning afterwards made to recover her ancient pre-eminence, seem to confirm the position, that under liberty alone she can acquire a permanent strength.

Under the happy reigns of Vespasian, Trajan, and the better Emperors, the short lived ray of returning Freedom awaked her from her lethargy; and Juvenal, the Plinies, and Tacitus, are enrolled in the last list of Roman worthies.—The works of the two Plinies might have been produced under any reign, however tyrannical.—The studies of the Naturalist could never awaken the jealousy of the most capricious Tyrant; and the Panegyric of the younger Pliny was a piece of complimentary flattery, which must be acceptable to the ears of any Prince. Of his letters it has been truly observed,

served, that they are only elegant trifles. In Cicero's collection we find a history of the times, the characters of the greatest men delineated with spirit, and his sentiments delivered with a Roman freedom. Pliny was overawed by the terrors of Despotism, and dared not to venture on topics which might rouse the anger of his Sovereign; but that Juvenal and Tacitus adorned this period, must uncontestibly be the effect of at least some degree of liberty; otherwise the unsparing lash of the Satirist would not have attacked the most powerful men of Rome; or the bold pen of the Historian dared to display the actions of the former Emperors with such freedom of censure, so odiously and yet so justly. He would have been contented with a bare relation, and left the reader to make those observations, which tho' he could not but have felt, he would have been afraid to give vent to; especially when Juvenal, in the reign of Domitian, had been banished for a slight reflection on an insignificant actor.

As in the course of this paper many of the great names of antiquity have been mentioned, I cannot help noticing the assertion of a very learned man, in which his partiality for the ancients seems to

have hurried him on beyond due lengths. I refer the Reader to the 127th paper, 4th vol. of the *Adventurer*, from whence the following is extracted, “The age will never again return, when
“ a Pericles, after walking with Plato in a Portico built by Phidias, and painted by Apelles,
“ might repair to hear a pleading of Demosthenes,
“ or a tragedy of Sophocles.”

Unless this passage is more accurately considered, it seems to give the decisive turn against the moderns; and presents a formidable list of great names to which we have but few to oppose. But if we examine the Chronological order, we shall find, that Pericles, Phidias, and Sophocles, were hardly contemporaries, Pericles dying in the 87th Olympiad; but Demosthenes, who was contemporary with Apelles, did not pronounce his first Philippic till the 107th, and Plato died in the 108th. The reader who would wish to know the more particular dates, I refer to Tallent's chronology, who has regulated his by Scaliger's tables.— From this it will appear, that tho' a Pericles might have walked in a Portico built by Phidias, it could not have been painted by Apelles; and tho' he might have heard a tragedy of Sophocles,
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he could not have conversed with Plato, or repaired to a pleading of Demosthenes. I might with equal justice say, the time will never return, when an Alfred, after walking with Bacon in a portico built by Wren, or painted by West, might repair to hear a speech of Chatham's, or a Tragedy of Shakespeare's. Surely this is an unfair mode of comparison, and to take a hint from his own motto,

Si veteres ita miratur laudatque;

Ut nihil anteferat, nihil illis comparet, errat.

But oft they labour under great mistakes,

As when their ancients lavishly they raise,

Above all modern rivalship and praise.—FRANCIS

But to return to my subject. From the variety of concurring accidents and combination of circumstances, which are so necessary if not to form, at least to force Genius into notice, it is more to be wondered at, that so many great characters have, than that more have not existed. True it is, that there are some, who are by nature endowed with such powers of mind, that they have risen superior to all surrounding impediments; but the number of these transcendent men are comparatively few with those who have rendered themselves

themselves eminent from the fortuitous concurrence of lucky circumstances. To any one who attentively considers the variety of characters which may be met with in a large public school, the following will appear no unimportant circumstance. He cannot but observe the great number of boys, who by their natural abilities and early attainments seem to promise future greatness; and who, provided they had all an equal chance of succeeding in the world, might attain the heights of excellence. Yet how few of them in their maturer years fulfil those expectations, which the earliest period of their life so justly excited.—The reason is evident, when at School they had full and fair scope for the exercise of their talents; they were fired with emulation, animated by the hope of glory. Envy had not as yet tainted the purity of the breast; and every one honestly confessed his admiration of their superior powers. When they enter the larger Theatre of the World, the case is widely different: The passions then take a larger range; Envy, and all the blacker ones expand themselves. One man hides himself in the obscurity of what mistaken philosophy calls a life of retirement and ease, that is, of indolence and sloth; another destroys himself in the excesses of licentious

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tious pleasure; here distressed merit pines in want and obscurity; there the bent of the soul is mistaken, and the injudicious and arbitrary will of a Parent or a Guardian, forces it into that line, where its lustre is darkened and its powers fail. For the human mind, in spite of the pride of wisdom, and vanity of self-complacency, is confined to a narrow sphere; tho' some men by the universality of their attainments, and versatility of their powers, seem to contradict this assertion, yet, those instances are so rare, as scarce to form an exception to the general rule. Newton is great as an astronomer, and Chatham as a statesman; when confined to their own proper paths, their abilities are wonderful, their glory consequently great; but place a Chatham at the astronomical calculation of a Newton, or a Newton at the helm of state, their respective worth is immediately lost, and they both would sink to the level of common mortals. Genius then, if not totally buried, is often perverted, and its powers rendered ineffectual. Pope observ'd of a certain illustrious character, "*How sweet an Ovid in a Murray lost,*" and it is not to be doubted, but that the abilities of many have been equally distorted from their natural bent.

I am inclined to think, that the maxim

“That as the twig is bent the tree’s inclin’d,”

is not universally tho’ generally true. Rather like a tree forced from its natural situation, it will, when left to the exercise of its own powers, recoil with the greater violence. We may remember that Addison was made a secretary of state, and Swift, if he had listened to King William, would have been a Cornet of Horse.—How little the talents of the one were adapted to his office is well known; what a figure the Author of the Tale of the Tub would have made as a Cornet, I leave to my readers to judge. The Attic elegance and polished wit of Addison was lost amidst the turbulence of State intrigues; and the keen sarcastic Genius of Swift was by no means fitted for the camp; unless it can be proved, that humour can gain a battle, or satire take a town.

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T H E
M I C R O C O S M.

No. XI.—MONDAY, February 12, 1787.

*Res gestæ regumque, ducumque, et tristia bella,
Quo scribi possint numero, monstravit Homerus.*—HOR.

*By Homer taught, the modern Poet sings,
In Epic strains, of heroes, wars, and Kings.*—FRAN.

✻✻✻✻✻ HERE are certain forms and etiquettes
✻ T ✻ in life, which, though the neglect of
✻✻✻✻✻ them does not amount to the commission
of a crime, or the violation of a duty, are yet so
established by example, and sanctioned by custom,
as to pass into Statutes, equally acknowledged by
society, and almost equally binding to individuals,
with the laws of the land, or the precepts of mo-
rality. A man guilty of breaking these, though
he cannot be transported for a felon, or indicted
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for treasonable practices, is yet, in the High Court of Custom, branded as a flagrant offender against decorum, as notorious for an unprecedented infringement on propriety.

There is no race of men on whom these laws are more severe than Authors; and no species of Authors more subject to them, than Periodical Essayists. *Homer* having prescribed the form, or, to use a more modern phrase, *set the fashion* of *Epic Poems*, whoever presumes to deviate from his plan, must not hope to participate his dignity: And whatever method, *The Spectator*, *The Guardian*, and others, who first adopted this species of writing, have pursued in their undertaking, is set down as a rule for the conduct of their followers; which, whoever is bold enough to transgress, is accused of a deviation from the original design, and a breach of established regulation.

It has hitherto been customary for all Periodical Writers, to take some opportunity, in the course of their labours, to display their Critical abilities, either by making observations on some popular Author, and work of known character, or by bringing forth the performances of hidden merit, and

and throwing light on genius in obscurity. To the critiques of *The Spectator*, *Shakspear*, and more particularly, *Milton*, are indebted, for no inconsiderable share of the reputation, which they now so universally enjoy ; and by his means were the ruder graces, and more simple beauties of *Chevy-Chace* held up to public view, and recommended to general admiration.

I should probably be accused of swerving from the imitation of so great an example, were not I to take occasion to shew that I too am not entirely destitute of abilities of this kind ; but that by possessing a decent share of critical discernment, and critical jargon, I am capable of becoming a very tolerable commentator. For the proof of which, I shall rather prefer calling the attention of my readers to an object, as yet untreated of by any of my immediate predecessors, than venture to throw in my observations on any work which has before passed the ordeal of frequent examination. And this I shall do for two reasons ; partly, because were I to choose a field, how fertile soever, of which many others had before me been reaping the fruits, mine would be at best but the gleanings of criticism ; and partly, from a more interested

ested view, from a selfish desire of accumulated praise; since, by making a work, as yet almost wholly unknown, the subject of my consideration, I shall acquire the reputation of taste, as well as judgment;—of judiciousness in selection, as well as justness in observation;—of propriety in choosing the object, as well as skill in using the language, of commentary.

The *Epic Poem* on which I shall ground my present critique, has for its chief characteristics, brevity and simplicity. The Author,—whose name I lament that I am, in some degree, prevented from consecrating to immortal fame, by not knowing what it is—the Author, I say, has not branched his poem into excrescences of episode, or prolixities of digression; it is neither variegated with diversity of unmeaning similitudes, nor glaring with the varnish of unnatural metaphor. The whole is plain and uniform; so much so indeed, that I should hardly be surprised if some morose readers were to conjecture, that the poet had been thus simple rather from necessity than choice; that he had been restrained not so much by chastity of judgment, as sterility of imagination.

Nay,

Nay, some there may be perhaps, who will dispute his claim to the title of an *Epic Poet*; and will endeavour to degrade him even to the rank of a *ballad-monger*. But I, as his Commentator, will contend for the dignity of my Author; and will plainly demonstrate his Poem to be an *Epic Poem*, agreeable to the example of all Poets, and the consent of all Critics heretofore.

First, it is universally agreed, that an *Epic Poem* should have three component parts; *a beginning, a middle, and an end*;—secondly, it is allowed, that it should have one *grand action, or main design*, to the forwarding of which, all the parts of it should directly or indirectly tend; and that this design should be in some measure consonant with, and conducive to, the purposes of *Morality*;—and thirdly, it is indisputably settled, that it should have a *Hero*. I trust that in none of these points the poem before us will be found deficient. There are other inferior properties, which I shall consider in due order.

Not to keep my readers longer in suspense, the subject of the poem is “*The Reformation of the Knave of Hearts*.” It is not improbable, that some
may

may object to me that a *Knave* is an unworthy Hero for an Epic Poem; that a Hero ought to be all that is great and good. The objection is frivolous. The greatest work of this kind that the World has ever produced, has "*The Devil*" for its Hero; and supported as my author is by so great a precedent, I contend, that his Hero is a very decent Hero; and especially as he has the advantage of *Milton's*, by reforming at the end, is evidently entitled to a competent share of celebrity.

I shall now proceed to the more immediate examination of the poem in its different parts. The *beginning*, say the Critics, ought to be plain and simple; neither embellished with the flowers of poetry, nor turgid with pomposity of diction. In this how exactly does our Author conform to the established opinion! he begins thus,

"The Queen of Hearts

"She made some Tarts"—

Can any thing be more clear! more natural! more agreeable to the true spirit of simplicity! Here are no tropes,—no figurative expressions,—not even so much as an invocation to the Muse. He does not detain his readers by any needless circumlocution; by unnecessarily informing them,
what

what he *is* going to sing; or still more unnecessarily enumerating what he *is not* going to sing: but according to the precept of Horace,

————— *in medias res,*
Non secus ac notas, auditorum rapit,——

That is, he at once introduces us, and sets us on the most easy and familiar footing imaginable, with her Majesty of Hearts, and interests us deeply in her domestic concerns. But to proceed,

“ *The Queen of Hearts*

“ *She made some Tarts,*

“ *All on a Summer’s Day.*”

Here indeed the prospect brightens, and we are led to expect some liveliness of imagery, some warmth of poetical colouring;—but here is no such thing.—There is no task more difficult to a Poet, than that of *Rejection*. *Ovid*, among the ancients, and *Dryden*, among the moderns, were perhaps the most remarkable for the want of it. The latter from the haste in which he generally produced his compositions, seldom paid much attention to the “*limæ labor*,” “the labour of correction,” and seldom therefore rejected the assistance of any idea that presented itself. *Ovid*, not content with catching the leading features of any scene or character, indulged himself in a thousand
minutiae

minutiæ of description, a thousand puerile prettinesses, which were in themselves uninteresting, and took off greatly from the effect of the whole; as the numberless suckers, and straggling branches of a fruit-tree, if permitted to shoot out unrestrained, while they are themselves barren and useless, diminish considerably the vigour of the parent stock. *Ovid* had more genius, but less judgment than *Virgil*; *Dryden* more imagination, but less correctness than *Pope*; had they not been deficient in these points, the former would certainly have equalled, the latter infinitely outshone the merits of his countryman.—*Our Author* was undoubtedly possessed of that power which they wanted; and was cautious not to indulge too far the sallies of a lively imagination. Omitting therefore any mention of—sultry *Sirius*,—silvan shade,—sequestered glade,—verdant hills,—purling rills,—mossy mountains,—gurgling fountains,—&c. &c.—he simply tells us that it was “*All on a Summer’s Day*.” For my own part, I confess, that I find myself rather flattered than disappointed; and consider the Poet as rather paying a compliment to the abilities of his readers, than baulking their expectations. It is certainly a great pleasure to see a picture well painted; but it

is a much greater to paint it well oneself. This therefore I look upon as a stroke of excellent management in the Poet. Here every reader is at liberty to gratify his own taste; to design for himself just what sort of "*Summer's Day*" he likes best; to choose his own scenery; dispose his lights and shades as he pleases; to solace himself with a rivulet, or a horse-pond,—a shower, or a sun-beam,—a grove, or a kitchen garden, according to his fancy. How much more considerate this, than if the Poet had, from an affected accuracy of description, thrown us into an unmannerly perspiration by the heat of the atmosphere; forced us into a landscape of his own planning, with perhaps a paltry good-for-nothing zephyr or two, and a limited quantity of wood and water.—All this *Ovid* would undoubtedly have done. Nay, to use the expression of a learned brother-commentator, "*quovis pigre decertem*" "I would lay any wager," that he would have gone so far as to tell us what the tarts were made of; and perhaps wandered into an episode on the art of preserving cherries. But *our Poet*, above such considerations, leaves every reader to choose his own ingredients, and sweeten them to his own liking; wisely foreseeing, no doubt, that the more palatable each had rendered them to his own

own taste, the more he would be affected at their approaching loss.

“*All on a Summer's Day.*”

I cannot leave this line without remarking, that one of the *Scribleri*, a descendant of the famous *Martinus*, has expressed his suspicions of the text being corrupted here, and proposes, instead of “*All on*” reading “*Alone*,” alledging, in favour of this alteration, the effect of Solitude in raising the passions. But *Hiccius Doctius*, a High Dutch commentator, one nevertheless well versed in British literature, in a note of his usual length and learning, has confuted the arguments of *Scriblerus*. In support of the present reading, he quotes a passage from a poem written about the same period with our author's, by the celebrated *Johannes Pastor**, intituled “*An Elegiac Epistle to the Turnkey of Newgate*,” wherein the gentleman declares, that rather indeed in compliance with an old custom, than to gratify any particular wish of his own, he is going

—————“*All hanged for to be*

“*Upon that fatal Tyburn tree.*”————

Now

* More commonly known, I believe, by the appellation of *Jack Shepherd*.

Now as nothing throws greater light on an author, than the concurrence of a contemporary writer, I am inclined to be of *Hiccius's* opinion, and to consider the "*All*" as an elegant expletive, or, as he more aptly phrases it "*elegans expletivum.*" The passage therefore must stand thus,

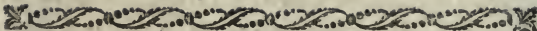
"*The Queen of Hearts*

"*She made some Tarts,*

"*All on a Summer's Day.*"

And thus ends the first part, or *beginning*; which is simple and unembellished; opens the subject in a natural and easy manner; excites, but does not too far gratify our curiosity: for a reader of accurate observation may easily discover, that the *Hero* of the Poem has not, as yet, made his appearance.

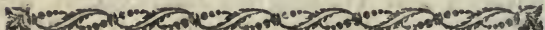
I could not continue my examination at present through the whole of this Poem, without far exceeding the limits of a single paper. I have therefore divided it into two; but shall not delay the publication of the second to another week,—as that, besides breaking the connection of criticism, would materially injure the *unities* of the Poem.



I cannot commit this paper to the public, without taking notice of an opinion, which has lately been disseminated by some people, viz. That the MICROCOSM, previous to its publication, is subjected to the criticism of my superiors, or, (in their own words) "*looked over by Usbers.*" This idea is wrong in two points; first, as being miserably *unclassical* in *phrase*, and secondly as being extremely *false* in *information*.

Slaves cannot live in *England*; *Ireland* enjoys an immunity from *toads*; in a similar degree is the climate and constitution of *Eton*, utterly unadapted to the existence of "*Usbers.*"--And however flattering it might be to *Gregory Griffin*, that his works should be considered as the compositions of riper years; he cannot but think this opinion an unworthy compliment to the genius and abilities of those, to whom they are, in part, ascribed.

I think it therefore my duty by this declaration, to "*take all my imperfections on my own head*;" and to assure the public, that little as the merit may be of these compositions, they are not "*usbered*" into the world by those, who are degraded by the supposition; the Assistant directors of *Eton* Education.



T H E
M I C R O C O S M.

No. XII.—MONDAY, February 12, 1787.

—————*Servetur ad inum,
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.*

HORACE.

*From his first Entrance, to the closing Scene,
Let him one equal Character maintain.*

FRANCIS

✻✻✻✻✻ HAVING thus gone through the first
✻✻✻ H part, or *beginning* of the Poem, we
✻✻✻✻✻ may, naturally enough, proceed to the
consideration of the second.

The second part, or *middle*, is the proper place
for bustle and business; for incident and adventure.

“ *The Knave of Hearts*

“ *He stole those Tarts.*”

Here attention is awakened; and our whole
souls are intent upon the first appearance of the

H 2

Hero.

Hero. Some readers may perhaps be offended at his making his *entré* in so disadvantageous a character as that of a *thief*. To this I plead precedent.

The Hero of the *Iliad*, as I observed in a former paper, is made to lament very pathetically, —that “life is not like all other possessions, to “be acquired by theft.”—A reflection, in my opinion, evidently shewing, that, if he *did* refrain from the practice of this ingenious art, it was not from want of an inclination that way. We may remember too, that in *Virgil’s* poem, almost the first light in which the *Pious Æneas* appears to us, is a *deer-stealer*; nor is it much excuse for him, that the deer were wandering without keepers; for however he might, from this circumstance, have been unable to ascertain whose property they were; he might, I think, have been pretty well assured that they were not *his*.

Having thus acquitted our Hero of misconduct, by the example of his betters, I proceed to what I think the Master-Stroke of the Poet.

“ *The Knave of Hearts*

“ *He stole those Tarts,*

“ *And — took them — quite away! !”*

Here

Here, whoever has an ear for harmony, and a heart for feeling, must be touched! There is a desponding melancholy in the run of the last line! an air of tender regret in the addition of "*quite away!*" a something so expressive of irrecoverable loss! so forcibly intimating the "*Ab nunquam reditura!*" "They never can return!" in short, such an union of sound and sense, as we rarely, if ever meet with in any author, ancient or modern. Our feelings are all alive—but the Poet, wisely dreading that our sympathy with the injured Queen might alienate our affections from his Hero, contrives immediately to awaken our fears for him, by telling us, that

"*The King of Hearts*

"*Call'd for those Tarts,*"—

We are all conscious of the fault of our Hero, and all tremble with him, for the punishment which the enraged Monarch may inflict;

"*And beat the Knave—full sore!*"

The fatal blow is struck! We cannot but rejoice that guilt is justly punished, though we sympathize with the guilty object of punishment. Here *Scriblerus*, who, by the bye, is very fond of making unnecessary alterations, proposes reading "*Score*" instead of "*sore*" meaning thereby to

particularize, that the beating bestowed by this Monarch, consisted of *twenty* stripes. But this proceeds from his ignorance of the genius of our language, which does not admit of such an expression as "*full score*," but would require the insertion of the particle "*a*," which cannot be, on account of the metre. And this is another great artifice of the Poet: by leaving the quantity of beating indeterminate, he gives every reader the liberty to administer it, in exact proportion to the sum of indignation which he may have conceived against his Hero; that by thus amply satisfying their resentment, they may be the more easily reconciled to him afterwards.

" *The King of Hearts*

" *Call'd for those Tarts,*

" *And beat the Knave full sore !*"

Here ends the second part, or *middle* of the poem; in which we see the character, and exploits of the Hero, pourtrayed with the hand of a master.

Nothing now remains to be examined, but the third part, or *End*. In the *End*, it is a rule pretty well established, that the Work should draw towards a conclusion, which our Author manages thus.

" *The*

“ *The Knave of Hearts*

“ *Brought back those Tarts.*”

Here every thing is at length settled ; the theft is compensated ; the tarts restored to their right owner ; and *Poetical Justice*, in every respect, strictly, and impartially administered.

We may observe, that there is nothing in which our poet has better succeeded, than in keeping up an unremitted attention in his readers to the main instruments, the machinery of his poem, viz. *The Tarts* ; inasmuch, that the aforementioned *Scriblerus* has sagely observed, that “ he can’t tell, but he doesn’t know, but the “ tarts may be reckoned the heroes of the Poem.” *Scriblerus*, though a man of learning, and frequently right in his opinion, has here certainly hazarded a rash conjecture. His arguments are overthrown entirely by his great opponent, *Hiccius*, who concludes, by triumphantly asking, “ Had the tarts been eaten, how could the Poet “ have compensated for the loss of his Heroes?”

We are now come to the *denouement*, the setting all to rights : and our Poet, in the management of his *moral*, is certainly superior to his great ancient

predecessors. The moral of their fables, if any they have, is so interwoven with the main body of their work, that in endeavouring to unravel it, we should tear the whole. *Our Author* has very properly preserved his whole and entire for the end of his poem, where he completes his *main design*, the *Reformation* of his Hero, thus,

“ *And vow'd he'd steal no more.*”

Having in the course of his work, shewn the bad effects arising from theft, he evidently means this last moral reflection, to operate with his readers as a gentle and polite dissuasive from stealing.

“ *The Knave of Hearts*

“ *Brought back those Tarts,*

“ *And vow'd he'd steal no more !”*

Thus have I industriously gone through the several parts of this wonderful Work ; and clearly proved it, in every one of these parts, and in all of them together, to be a *due and proper Epic Poem*; and to have as good a right to that title, from its adherence to prescribed rules, as any of the celebrated master-pieces of antiquity. And here I cannot help again lamenting, that, by not knowing the name of the Author, I am unable to twine our laurels together ; and to transmit to posterity the

the mingled praises of Genius, and Judgment; of the Poet, and his Commentator.

Having some space left in this paper, I will now, with the permission of my readers of the *great world*, address myself more particularly to my fellow-citizens.

To them the essay which I have here presented, will, I flatter myself, be peculiarly serviceable at this time; and I would earnestly recommend an attentive perusal of it to all of them whose muses are engaged in compositions of the *Epic* kind.—I am very much afraid that I may run into the error, which I have myself pointed out, of becoming too *local*,—but where it is evidently intended for the good of my fellow citizens, it may, I hope, be now and then pardonable. At the present juncture, as many have applied for my assistance, I cannot find in my heart to refuse it them. Were I to attempt fully explaining, why, at the *present juncture*, I fear it would be vain. Would it not seem incredible to the Ladies, were I to tell them, that the period approaches, when upwards of a hundred *Epic Poems** will be exposed

H 5

to

* Bacchus ; abolished in the succeeding year.

to public view, most of them nearly of equal length, and many of them nearly of equal merit, with the one which I have here taken into consideration; illustrated moreover with elegant etchings, designed either as *hieroglyphical* explanations of the subject, or as *practical puns* on the name of the author?—And yet in truth so it is,—and on this subject I wish to give a word of advice to my countrymen.

Many of them have applied to me by letter, to assist them with designs for prefixing to their poems; and this I should very willingly have done, had those gentlemen been kind enough to subscribe their real names to their requests: whereas, all that I have received have been signed, *Tom Long*, *Philosophus*, *Philaletes*, and such like. I have therefore been prevented from affording them the assistance I wished; and cannot help wondering, that the gentlemen did not consider, that it was impossible for me to provide *typical references* for feigned names; as, for ought I know, the person who signs himself *Tom Long* may not be four feet high; *Philosophus* may be possessed of a considerable share of folly; and *Philaletes* may be as arrant a liar as any in the kingdom.

It

It may not however be useless to offer some general reflections for all who may require them. It is not improbable, that, as the subject of their poems is the *Restoration*, many of my fellow-citizens may choose to adorn their *title-pages* with the representation of His Majesty, Charles the Second, escaping the vigilance of his pursuers in the *Royal Oak*. There are some particularities generally observable in this picture, which I shall point out to them, lest they fall into similar errors. Though I am as far as any other Briton can be, from wishing to "curtail" his Majesty's Wig "of its fair proportion;" yet I have sometimes been apt to think it rather improper, to make the Wig, as is usually done, of larger dimensions than the tree in which it and his Majesty are concealed. It is a rule in Logic, and I believe may hold good in most other Sciences, that "*omne majus continet in se minus*," that "every thing larger can hold any thing that is less;" but I own, I never heard the contrary advanced or defended with any plausible arguments, viz. "that every little thing can hold one larger." I therefore humbly propose, that there should be at least an edge of foliage round the outskirts of the said wig; and that its curls should not exceed in number the leaves of the tree.

tree. There is also another practice almost equally prevalent, of which I am sceptic enough to doubt the propriety. I own, I cannot think it by any means conducive to the more effectual concealment of his Majesty, that there should be three Regal Crowns stuck on three different branches of the tree. Horace says indeed,

—————*Pictoribus atque Poetis,*

Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas.

Painters and Poets our indulgence claim,

Their daring equal, and their art the same.—FRAN.

And this may be reckoned a very allowable poetical licence; inasmuch as it lets the spectator into the secret, *who is in the tree*. But it is apt to make him at the same time throw the accusation of negligence and want of penetration on the three dragoons, who are usually depicted on the foreground, cantering along very composedly, with serene countenances, erect persons, and drawn swords, very little longer than themselves.

B

THE
MICROCOSM.

No. XIII.—MONDAY, February 19, 1787.

*Quanto ferocius ante se egerint, tanto cupidius insolitas
voluptates hausisse.*—TAC.

*Their appetite for unusual pleasure, was in proportion
to their former ferocity.*

✻✻✻✻ HERE are many ideas, which, as
✻ T ✻ I have hinted in a former paper, we
✻✻✻✻ are apt, merely on poetical authority,
to adopt as data, and to substitute the pleasing,
but extravagant exuberance of a luxuriant fancy,
for the convincing solidity of Historical demon-
stration. Among these, none perhaps recurs
more frequently to our imagination, or strikes it
more forcibly, than the primæval innocence of
man. We inwardly reproach ourselves with de-
generacy; and are chagrined, when, after having
con-

contemplated the beauties of so highly finished a picture, we cast our eyes on an imperfect sketch which suffers so much by the comparison.

A state of nature, however, when divested of its poetical ornaments, will be found to be by no means a state of innocence; and we shall perceive, upon a more accurate inspection, that civilization, far from being prejudicial to the virtues of mankind, is in reality that fine polish which displays his exalted endowments to advantage; and effects the grand distinction between brute and human nature. The soul of man is so intimately blended with his passions, that Apathy is almost non-existence; and even in the most sluggish and insensible, we discover some ruling appetite, some main spring, which seems to actuate the few ideas of his listless vacancy. To reduce these therefore from our tyrants to our assistants, and to convert to the purposes of an agreeable variety, what was originally the cause of a flagitious sameness in our actions, is surely beneficial to the community. The vices of Nature are concentrated, but violent; those of Civilization diffuse, but gentle. According therefore to the established political maxim, *Divide and conquer*, those of the latter being

ing individually less powerful, are more easily subdued. To this it may be objected, that if the vices of the natural man are more violent, his virtues are at least of a superior nature; that obsequious insincerity is but a bad substitute for disinterested honesty; and that where courage and friendship are exchanged for policy and civility, however it may advance the abilities of mankind, it argues that their hearts are proportionably corrupted.

Specious as the names of these virtues are, that boasted honesty while it extended its influence to the immediate circle in which it moved, narrowed the heart against a general intercourse with mankind, and precluded the idea of philanthropic benevolence; on the contrary, a general attention to the duties of Society, while like the sun it diffuses its light and heat, loses nothing of its central fire. Courage, when restricted by laws, is a desirable attribute; but when it becomes its own legislator, is too much the child of chance to be depended upon as the arbiter of the happiness or misery of mankind.

Civilized Policy is by no means so infernal an agent to ambition as it has been generally represented. The time is at length arrived in the more enlightened parts of Europe, when the statesman has ceased to adopt the dagger and the bowl, as necessary pieces of furniture in his cabinet; and in the present age, the School of Machiaval is not considered as the only road to greatness: so far has the refined spirit of the times contributed to humanize even the love of power.

Having thus endeavoured to prove, that a closer union of the bonds of Society is by no means derogatory to the dignity, or even prejudicial to the interests of mankind; my next endeavour shall be to investigate, what in all ages has been the most effectual method of reducing barbarous ferocity; of softening the vices of human nature into foibles; and of refining its good qualities into virtues. And no principle we may observe has been more conducive to these effects than the love of pleasure. We may exemplify this by the authority of the most consummate politicians; the revolutions of the most powerful empires;

empires ; and the * errors of the most experienced commanders, the world ever produced. Cæsar, in accounting for the superior ferocity of the Germans to the Gauls, mentions, as the principal cause, the effeminacy which a frequent intercourse with merchants had introduced among the latter ; but which, among the former, was hitherto but little known. Nay, so adapted to the support of this idea are the words of Tacitus, in relating Agricola's method of reducing the savage independence of the Britons, that I will trespass on the Reader's patience by transcribing them.

Ut homines dispersi et rudes, eoque bello faciles, quieti et otio per voluptates assuescerent ; hortari privatim, adjuvare publicè, ut templa, fora, domus exstruerent, laudando promptos, et castigando segnes. Jam vero principum filios liberalibus artibus erudire. Inde etiam habitus nostri honor, et frequens toga. Paulatimque discessum ad delinimenta vitiorum, porticus, et balnea, et conviviorum elegantiam. Idque apud

* This position may seem a little extraordinary, but as the opposite events tend chiefly to the aggrandizement of individuals, it is to subsequent effects we are to look for the advantageous or destructive tendency of these.

apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset.

“ That this nation, dispersed and uncultivated,
“ and on that account more prone to war, might,
“ by indulgencies become more accustomed to
“ ease and quiet, he began privately to encourage,
“ and publickly to assist them in building temples,
“ courts of judicature, and habitations ; by com-
“ mending the ready and chastising the idle ; and
“ at the same time, to instruct the sons of their
“ chieftains in the liberal arts. From hence arose
“ their respect for us, and their frequent assump-
“ tion of the Roman Habit ; so that by degrees
“ they were brought over to the allurements of
“ luxury, Porticos and Baths, and elegant enter-
“ tainments ; their ignorance giving the name of
“ refinement, to what was in reality to conduce to
“ their slavery.”

A convincing proof, that this politic measure was approved of by this great pattern of provincial government ; a measure, which, when we reflect on its salutary consequences, naturally brings to our mind the opposite conduct of the first invaders of America, whose progress was marked
with

with such carnage, merely perhaps from their ignorance or neglect of this founded principle.

To proceed however in illustrating what I have advanced, and to prove that the love of pleasure has often been instrumental to subverting the constitution of empires founded on Military law, by lulling to sleep this ferocious insolence where it was a constituent part of the government ; I need only recur to the well known instances of Sparta and Rome. The decline of the former, may, with great reason be dated from the abrogation of those wise sumptuary laws instituted by the political penetration of Lycurgus. That celebrated Legislator, from having long studied the genius of his countrymen, judged, that a military government was most peculiarly adapted to it ; and that the very principle of refinement, which, from their innate pride supported the Athenians, would tend to enervate the haughty severity of the Spartans ; and subvert that warlike disposition by which alone they existed as a commonwealth. The alteration produced in the manners, and shortly after in the government of the latter, from similar causes, (a period of about one hundred and thirty years

years having elapsed from the introduction of the Corinthian and Syracusan luxuries, to the perpetual dictatorship of Sylla,) is too well known to need discussion here. Suffice it to say, that during this interval, and even after the subversion of the Commonwealth, the great and elegant geniuses, who from the introduction of the liberal arts, were enabled to add cultivation to a rich and luxuriant soil, have so far obscured the rugged and unformed virtues of their predecessors, that though the mind may rest with a momentary satisfaction on a Cincinnatus or a Fabricius, it is to the refined voluptuousness of a Lucullus, the unbounded soul of a Cæsar, and the inexhausted genius of a Cicero, that we look for the character of this extraordinary people.

Lastly, to exemplify this idea in the defeats or dissolution of the most powerful and veteran armies, which have entirely originated in a deviation from the simple abstinence necessary to their unity, let us take a short review of the conduct of Hannibal, from his entrance into Italy, to the defection of Capua. This astonishing commander, having through the most barbarous countries in
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the midst of the united attacks of war, famine, and tempest, cemented the jarring interests of an army made up of the flower of some nations, and the scum of others; having personally surmounted the most incredible difficulties, and in all his enterprizes united the characters of soldier and general; having gained four decisive victories over the Romans in the very heart of Italy; neither himself nor his army could resist the soft climate and luxurious effeminacy of Campania, "*Adeo ut vere dictum sit,*" says Florus, "*Capuam Hannibali Cannas fuisse.*" "*So that it was with justice said, that Capua was Hannibal's Cannæ.*" I might farther enforce this maxim, by Cæsar's description of the state of Pompey's camp, when he accounts for his victory in Theffaly; and afterwards by the effect of Egyptian Luxury on the veteran legions of Antony; were I not hastening to a period, with which, as I presume, some of my fellow-Citizens are unwillingly familiar, I purpose concluding this *winter's tale*.

The sudden alteration in the genius of the English on the Restoration, an Epocha which has now a double hold on immortal celebrity, from
the

the assistance of History and Poetry, has been to some a matter of surprise; and the immediate transition from the cold suspicious policy of Cromwell, and the fanatic hypocrisy of the Commonwealth, to the general spirit of dissipation, and the sudden revival of sprightly wit, and genius in all its levity, which characterized the reign of Charles, has been considered as a striking instance of fickleness in the human understanding.

But it was probably this principle, so inherent in our natures, which gave rise to so general a variation. The mind of man, after having been harassed by the usurpation of the more violent passions, seizes with avidity, the first object which offers itself, as a relaxation from care, and a gratification of the unsatisfied appetites. This was, at the accession of Charles, the state of England; at one time distracted by internal discord, at another enslaved by its pretended deliverer, it easily concurred with the more voluptuous disposition of its new master, in exchanging Political, for Poetical ribaldry; and converting the intrigues of the Cabinet, into those of the Chamber. In the one case, the angry collision of two
thunder

thunder clouds, struck forth mutual flashes, whose progress was only known by the subsequent destruction; in the other, the returning Sun, doubly prolific after the storm, nurtured those flowers of wit and genius, which form no inconsiderable figure in the Annals of English literature.

The same effects from the same causes may be observed to have taken place in the latter years of William's reign, and more particularly during that of Queen Anne, (deservedly esteemed the Augustan age of Great-Britain;) and from that period, though perhaps the same day has not seen the united excellencies of so many distinguished men, our visible refinements on Luxury will be sufficient evidence of our progress in civilization. Innumerable are the conveniencies, nay, superfluities of life in this opulent kingdom, which in the beginning of this Century were totally unknown; and which, though they may feed Cynical spleen, or offend the severity of a Stoic, if they tend to add one more link to the chain of society, to awaken one more liberal emotion in the heart, or to humanize, into a citizen of the world, one
more

more malecontent, (as from their tendency we have evident reason to suppose they do,) the temporal evil is by no means equivalent to the lasting good ; and the man who advances civilization to its highest polish, is the most beneficial member of the community.

C

NOTES to CORRESPONDENTS.



I cannot comply with the request of NUMA, as it would be highly presumptuous in me to engage in any religious controversy.---ALFRED shall be attended to,--but may depend upon proper enquiry being made at the Herald's Office, with regard to the performance of his promise.---CHRISTOPHER CUTJOKE shall appear.

T H E
M I C R O C O S M .

No. XIV.—MONDAY, *February 26, 1787.*

Locus est et pluribus umbris.—HOR.

Still I have room.—————FRANCIS.

CCORDING to my promise made
in a former paper, I shall dedicate
this to the favors of correspondents.
They will see that I have been care-
ful to abridge nothing, but what was necessary to
reduce their letters to a more convenient size.

‘TO THE MICROCOSMOPOLITAN.

‘SIR,

‘An ingenious paper of your’s, con-
‘taining some acute and just observations on Epi-
‘taphs, induced me to offer for your inspection
‘the following remarks on that subject.

Vol. I.

I

‘We

‘ We need no other witnesses than our own con-
‘ science, to convict us of that inordinate love of
‘ Fame, so predominant in all orders and ranks of
‘ men. If then in the prime of life, this passion
‘ prevails over every other consideration, and out-
‘ balances all objections thrown into the opposite
‘ scale by virtue or religion; if those moralists are
‘ to be credited, who contend, not without some
‘ shadow of reason, that the passions operate on
‘ the human mind in a greater degree, as we draw
‘ nearer to our end; this, above all others, must
‘ consequently have greater influence at that awful
‘ period; since its sole aim is to be the topic of
‘ praise and admiration to its own and succeeding
‘ generations. Why do the “short and simple
‘ annals of the poor,” in the Country-Church-
‘ Yard, court the tribute of a tear from the sym-
‘ pathetic traveller? Why do we behold with
‘ wonder and astonishment, the monumental re-
‘ cords of the rich and noble in that vast pile of
‘ antiquity, where the Princes and Prelates, the
‘ Heroes and Poets of this land, lie mouldering
‘ together? For the same reason;—that desire of
‘ being distinguished, even after death, from the
‘ common herd of mortals, formed of the same
‘ perishable materials as ourselves. The unlettered
‘ rustic

‘ rustic exults as much in his ill shaped rhimes,
‘ which afford matter of conversation to the hum-
‘ ble tenants of his native Hamlet, as the trophied
‘ General in the superb folly of a stupendous Mau-
‘ soleum; both feel a proportionable degree of
‘ happiness, if they die with the hopes that their
‘ name shall escape the canker-worm of oblivion,

‘ In the gradual rise therefore and progress of
‘ different states, we may observe with what
‘ judgement the legislators selected this passion, as
‘ the hinge on which many of their principal laws
‘ seem to turn; no incentive to virtue was found
‘ so efficacious, as inscribing the actions of the
‘ dead on their monuments: thus inciting future
‘ heroes to similar exertions, by holding up to
‘ their eyes the laurels of their ancestors.

‘ The Lacedemonians, indeed thoroughly un-
‘ derstood the force and policy of this last tribute
‘ to the memory of the dead, and enacted a law,
‘ prohibiting all in their realm from making
‘ Epitaphs on any persons except those who had
‘ surrendered up their lives for the service of their
‘ country; and in what did the bulwark and glory
‘ of Sparta consist? In military valour! which she

‘endeavoured to strengthen by a reward the most
‘endearing and grateful to the soul of man; a cer-
‘tainty that his fame should survive the frailty of
‘human nature.

‘When therefore we reflect on their utility, we
‘cannot but lament the paucity of good Epitaphs;
‘tho’ it is indeed a kind of writing so generally
‘cultivated in all nations, that certainly there
‘must be *some* in every country which redound as
‘well to the honor of the author, as to the glory
‘of those whom they immortalize. I wave men-
‘tioning many in our own language, which, tho’
‘excellent, are obvious to every one; but cannot
‘help claiming your attention to one not so gene-
‘rally known, and at the same time remarkable
‘for its elegance and simplicity. Drayton was a
‘Poet, who lived in the sixteenth century.

‘*Doe, pious marble, let thy readers know,*
‘*What they and what their children owe*
‘*To Drayton’s name, whose sacred dust*
‘*Wee recommend unto thy trust;*
‘*Protect his memory and preserve his Storye,*
‘*Remain a lasting monument of his Glorie,*

‘*And*

‘ *And when thy ruins shall disclame*
 ‘ *To be the Treas’rer of his name,*
 ‘ *His name, which cannot fade, shall be*
 ‘ *An everlasting monument to thee.*

‘ How different are the Epitaph-writers of
 ‘ these days, when every tomb-stone bears the
 ‘ strongest contradiction to truth and reason. To
 ‘ be assured of this, only take a survey of the bu-
 ‘ rial places within the bills of mortality, and at
 ‘ the same time a retrospect of the lives of those,
 ‘ whose bones are adorned with this miserable and
 ‘ faithless descant on their virtues; and you will
 ‘ find every day some fresh proof, how frequently

——— “ *Some kind friend supplies,*
 “ *Hic jacet, and a hundred lies.* ”

‘ The notoriety indeed of their misuse is so fla-
 ‘ grant among the French, that “ *Menteur comme*
 ‘ “ *un Epitaph,* ” passes for a proverb with them.
 ‘ But not to detain you any longer on this subject,
 ‘ I shall present you with the following, as a spe-
 ‘ cimen of honesty and integrity in an Epitaph
 ‘ rarely to be found. It is written on an amphi-
 ‘ bious animal, vulgarly called a Marine; and I
 ‘ suspect it to be the production of some true-

‘ hearted Tar, both from the originality and peculiar bluntness of the composition, but I leave that to the decision of the learned.

‘ *Here lies retired from busy scenes,*
‘ *A first Lieutenant of Marines,*
‘ *Who lately lived in health and plenty,*
‘ *On board the good ship, Diligentè,*
‘ *Now stripp’d of all his warlike shew,*
‘ *And laid in box of elm below,*
‘ *Confin’d to earth in narrow borders,*
‘ *He rises not till further orders.*

‘ But to return to my subject, and to apply it more particularly to those for whom it was intended, will prove on trial a more difficult and important matter, than at first it appeared to be. For there are certain followers of Democritus, who maintain, that *every thing serious is ridiculous*. Paradoxical as this doctrine seems, there are not wanting those, even in our *lesser world*, who laugh reflection out of countenance, merely because it comes not within the sphere of their comprehension. But I shall consider myself as addressing those who are unhackneyed in the ways of this sect; the lovers of contemplation, and you, who have exhibited by your weekly lucubrations

‘cubrations a fondness and attachment to literature, highly meritorious, and leave them to enjoy their laugh, tho’ at my expence.

‘Are the young and inexperienced to admire an Epitaph on a distinguished and noble character, for the elegance and perspicuity of the style; for the harmony of the periods alone? Does the entombed glory of Chatham suggest to the contemplative mind no other ideas than those, which are fleet and transient as the morning dew before the Sun? No, “*E’en from the Tomb the voice of Nature cries,*” while we contemplate with regret the loss of a great and noble hero, “*Go and do thou likewise.*”

‘CÆMETERIUS.

I cannot better comply with the request of the young Lady to whom I am indebted for the following letter, than by publishing her case in her own words.

‘TO GREGORY GRIFFIN, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘YOU, who are scarcely entered into life, yet know so well how to judge

‘ of its proprieties, will take up with spirit, I flat-
‘ ter myself, the subject which I propose recom-
‘ mending to your observation. And as you are
‘ in a great measure the Guardian of a world,
‘ whose inhabitants will one day largely con-
‘ tribute to fill up the various circles of higher life,
‘ any hints from a pen so peculiarly interesting as
‘ yours, must deeply impress their minds with the
‘ conviction of those truths you wish to inculcate.

‘ My case will perhaps seem at first sight un-
‘ worthy of serious consideration; but it has been
‘ very truly observed, by many very wise men,
‘ that there are trivial mortifications, which, be-
‘ ing considered by the world as too insignificant
‘ for their pity, are, more particularly perhaps on
‘ that account, equally painful to the sufferer with
‘ the most serious misfortunes.

‘ The circumstances which I at present allude
‘ to, are the loud whispers, the half-suppressed
‘ fits of laughter, and those other nameless rude-
‘ nesses, which are not so pointed as to bring a
‘ *Jemmy Fellow* into danger of a serious reprimand;
‘ but are generally too well understood by the vic-
‘ tim of their raillery, and are very long and se-
‘ verely

‘ verely felt.—Perhaps I shall better elucidate my
‘ meaning by a candid recital of the particular af-
‘ fair which induced me to write to you, of which
‘ you will make what use you please; and grant
‘ generous allowances to the first female corres-
‘ pondent who claims your countenance and
‘ support.

‘ I have been educated very far from the gay
‘ and fashionable world; and my heart now pal-
‘ pitates at the recollection of what I felt, when
‘ on the morning of my eighteenth year my father
‘ offered me a journey to London. I accepted it
‘ with transport, and I have actually been in Town
‘ now a whole fortnight. It would be dull and
‘ uninteresting to give you an account of all the
‘ raptures I have felt at the variety of scenes,
‘ which have the powerful charm of novelty,
‘ added to all that is pleasing, to recommend them.

‘ An invitation to a ball awaited my arrival;
‘ and great was the metamorphosis made in my
‘ appearance, to qualify me for the very best com-
‘ pany. After a last look of approbation at my
‘ glass, I had scarcely courage to encounter my
‘ father’s eye with a sight so new to him. I hesi-
‘ tated as I entered the room; he surveyed me

‘ with a look of mingled affection and surprize ;
‘ my huge muff fell from my hand, and appeared
‘ to me at that moment more formidable than
‘ the animal could have done to whom it origi-
‘ nally belonged. By an approving smile, how-
‘ ever from my father, the muff was re-inflated
‘ in my favour ; the *whim* of my cap was changed
‘ into *taste* ; the feathers drooped more gracefully
‘ than ever ; and I adjusted my handkerchief in
‘ perfect good humour with its enlarged and ex-
‘ tended size.—Thus self-complacent, my mind
‘ was left at ease to dwell upon the delightful ex-
‘ pectations I had formed from the ball. My
‘ watch surely beat more tedious hours than when
‘ I was in the Country. The moment however at
‘ last arrived. I entered the room full of a thou-
‘ sand pleasing chimeras ; and, as I felt a warm
‘ animated glow of partiality for every body I
‘ saw, I never once conceived, but they all felt a
‘ reciprocal lively prepossession in my favor.

‘ While the lady of the house was introducing
‘ me to the circle of her friends, and my heart
‘ was exulting with joy not to be described, a
‘ smart well-dressed beau tripped up to a lady near
‘ me, and significantly repeated, in a loud whisper,

“ So

“ *So stiff, so mute, some statue you would swear,*

“ *Stepp’d from its pedestal to take the air.*”

‘ I turned suddenly round and caught his eye,
‘ a titter followed,—and in one moment I was
‘ humbled to the dust. Judge of my sensations ;
‘ confused, mortified, and all my hopes of pleasing
‘ flown. In vain I endeavoured to recover my
‘ cheerfulness ; my partner was pleasing and at-
‘ tentive ; but the frightful figure, who had thus
‘ put me out of humour with myself, came so of-
‘ ten near me in the dance, and his odious rhyme
‘ so jingled in my ears, that it was to no purpose
‘ I reasoned against those feelings, which the
‘ consciousness of guilt itself could hardly have
‘ encreased.

‘ Pray tell me, my dear Sir, where do people de-
‘ rive the right to trifle with the ease and comfort
‘ of others ? The advantages of fortune and edu-
‘ cation, which this gentleman, I find, may boast
‘ of, were no advantages to me. They might
‘ have been extremely pleasing, had they induced
‘ him to behave with common propriety to a per-
‘ son (said to be handsome,) certainly *young*, and
‘ a *stranger*, and who could not therefore possibly
‘ have offended him.

‘ As

‘As *good breeding* is founded on *good sense*, and
‘clearly meant to prevent uneasy feelings, should
‘there not be some badge worn by those Gen-
‘tlemen who defy laws it is so much to the in-
‘terest of society to revere, that we may know
‘how to escape their insults? I will not say that
‘a Highwayman would *frighten* me less with a
‘pistol pointed at my breast; but I am certain I
‘could forgive him sooner: The one is an open
‘attack, from which, if you *can*, you *may* defend
‘yourself; in the other case there is no tempta-
‘tion, but from the hope of giving pain, and
‘witnessing the cruel effects of it;—a pleasure
‘which I do not recollect that *Milton* has ascribed
‘to his fallen Angels.

‘Let me hope then, that you, Sir, will bestow
‘some salutary admonitions on persons of this de-
‘scription; and will take the trouble to inform
‘them, that the behaviour, of which I complain;
‘is utterly unworthy of a Gentleman; of a man
‘of honour, courage, and benevolence.

‘I am, dear Sir, with the greatest respect,

‘Your humble Servant,

‘A mortified

‘COUNTRY GIRL.’

That

That I may as much as possible fulfil the desire of my fair Correspondent, I shall subjoin, for the information and edification of all whom it may concern of the great and little world, the following Resolutions, passed in a COMMITTEE appointed for the purpose of investigating all manners, customs, and behaviour of *Children*, of what kind or denomination soever.

GREGORY GRIFFIN, Esq in the Chair.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,

I. That the being able to say by heart two or more lines of *Pope*, or any other Poet or author whatsoever, does not constitute a *pretty fellow*, a wit, or a satirist.

II. That it is the opinion of this Committee, that wilfully and maliciously to insult the feelings of an inoffensive and unprotected female, is, in the extreme, mean, cowardly, and ungenerous.

Mr. GRIFFIN then leaving the chair, it was

RESOLVED,

That the thanks of this meeting be given to the Chairman, for his active, candid, and impartial conduct.

Mr.

Mr. GRIFFIN then resumed the Chair, and it was

RESOLVED,

I. That this Committee do continue to sit on every business, complaint, or application, of what kind soever that is laid before the MICROCOSMOPOLITAN; and strictly and impartially do examine, investigate, and determine on the same.

II. That the Resolutions of this COMMITTEE be printed in the Microcosm.

Signed by the Chairman.


GREGORY GRIFFIN, Chairman.

THE
MICROCOSM.

No. XV.—MONDAY, March 5, 1787.

Discordia semina rerum.——OVID..

Discordant matter.

HE first of the following letters I insert, as well on account of its intrinsic merit, as because it contains a request, with which I think it my duty to comply; and its own appearance will be not a little serviceable towards promoting the wish of its Author.—The second claims my attention, as it practically illustrates, in a manner very striking, a proposition I have before laid down, namely, the ill effects arising from intemperate joking.

To

‘ TO GREGORY GRIFFIN, Esq.

‘ *London, February, 1787.*

‘ SIR,

‘ AS the motive which has induced you to undertake your justly-admired Work, seems chiefly the good of your fellow-citizens; and as the plan upon which you profess to conduct it, is so truly liberal, I am assured that a hint from whatever quarter, will not fail to meet with a favorable reception.—Your illustrious predecessors, the *Spectator*, *Rambler*, &c. &c. were so famous for their candid and disinterested conduct in this particular, that they were not afraid of displaying the faults which their correspondents pointed out; a circumstance which, (with the wise and discerning) must have contributed not a little to advance their reputation.—But it is not faults, Sir, upon which I would descant; I declare to you at present I have not perceived any which are material; and I am not one of those cavilling critics who are eager to

“ *Catch the straws which swim at top,*

“ *And leave the pearls behind.”*

‘ My

‘ My present intention is merely to take the liberty of pointing out to you a subject which I should be happy to see discussed in one of your papers ; a subject which I think as likely to be beneficial to your contemporaries in their future progress through life, as most which could be proposed.—It is, Sir, to point out to them, the very essential difference which subsists between true and false greatness.

‘ There are some of them whose unhappy propensity to indolence and futility, you have humorously described ; but there are doubtless others, who have a laudable ambition to distinguish themselves, and who (to make them valuable as well as conspicuous members of society) want only some friendly hand to point out the proper goal to which their race should be directed.

‘ Of all the powers of the human mind, the judgement seems to be that which arrives the latest at perfection : the reason is obvious ; to compare and decide, requires a degree of calmness and perspicuity, almost incompatible with the fire and enthusiasm of youth.

‘ Without

‘ Without some assistance, therefore, my good
‘ Sir, how are they likely to discriminate between
‘ what is really, or only apparently great; will
‘ not the glare of the one be preferred to the steady
‘ brightness of the other? will not partial excel-
‘ lence delude their imagination? and when the
‘ admirable and the estimable come in competi-
‘ tion, will they not be apt to seize the former
‘ with eagerness, and reject the latter with con-
‘ tempt?

‘ The cold cautions of age and experience deli-
‘ vered upon these occasions, are generally derided,
‘ or at best heard with indifference; but this can-
‘ not be the case, Sir, when they come from you.
‘ —Your fellow-citizens will surely listen with
‘ attention to one, who has reflected so much
‘ honour upon their society; and will receive with
‘ confidence the precepts of one, who convinces
‘ them by his conduct that he not only knows,
‘ but practises what is truly meritorious.

‘ Hasten then, my good Sir, to instruct them in
‘ what real greatness consists. Should you suc-
‘ ceed, the rising generation will have cause to
‘ bless you! the name of the MICROCOSMO-
POLITAN

‘ POLITAN will be mentioned with admiration
 ‘ and reverence to all futurity ; and as for myself,
 ‘ I protest to you, my family Crest shall be imme-
 ‘ diately erased, and a Griffin substituted in its
 ‘ room.

‘ I am, Sir, with the truest respect,

‘ Your constant reader,

‘ And admirer,

‘ ALFRED.’

‘ SIR,

‘ AS the poor wretch who is
 ‘ about to suffer the last penalty of the law, points
 ‘ out to his fellow creatures the errors which have
 ‘ caused his ruin, and, at the same time patheti-
 ‘ cally warns them by his unhappy fate ; so I,
 ‘ with like conviction of misconduct, am soli-
 ‘ citous to represent to the world my own inadver-
 ‘ tencies ; and by my example, to caution others
 ‘ against committing faults similar to those which
 ‘ have proved my ruin.

‘ You must know, Mr. Griffin, that ‘in my
 ‘ younger days I was exceedingly ambitious of
 ‘ being

‘ being distinguished as a jester. There was no
‘ other consideration with me in life but what I
‘ would willingly sacrifice to this. When at Eton,
‘ I was remarked for being much better ac-
‘ quainted with *Joe Miller* and *Tom Brown*, than
‘ any of the Greek or Roman Classics. My pro-
‘ fession was the Law, but I could not endure its
‘ drudgery; and therefore instead of *sapping* at the
‘ statutes at large in my chambers, or *sporting*
‘ *Cicero* at the bar, I employed my time in scrib-
‘ bling Bon-mots for the newspapers, and fre-
‘ quenting the society of *young fellows* of wit and
‘ pleasure. The clubs, of which I was a mem-
‘ ber, declared me a phenomenon of wit. I was
‘ pleased with this distinction; and knowing that
‘ my company in general consisted of men who
‘ had little to boast of but their facetiousness, I
‘ frequently paid for them their tavern reckonings,
‘ that I might enjoy the liveliness of their conver-
‘ sation; and purchased my participation of their
‘ festivity, at a price little suitable to the contracted
‘ state of my finances.

‘ I had once the happiness of possessing a very
‘ valuable friend. He was an exceedingly honest
‘ man, firmly attached to me, and capable as well

‘ as willing to do me many services ; but unfortunately, he was not remarkable for any great quality of penetration ; and besides this he had a natural imperfection in his speech. Happening one day to be reckoning up with him a list of famous Orators, and humorously putting his name among the number, he fell into a violent rage, insisted that I insulted him, and pulled me by the nose. I pitying his want of sagacity in not discovering that all I intended was a joke, and at the same time reflecting that fighting was no part of the business of a man of wit, very calmly pocketed the affront, and left him. Thus terminated our intercourse of friendship.

‘ Some years ago I paid my addresses to a young lady, celebrated for her great beauty, fortune, and mental endowments. I had every reason to felicitate myself on the prospect of being happily united to her ; ’till chancing one evening to cut a joke on the seventh commandment, in the presence of herself and father, I was immediately frowned at by the lady, rebuked by the old gentleman, and soon after forbid the presence of the one, and the dwelling of the other.

‘ In

‘ In the early part of my life, I was regarded by
‘ an old rich uncle of mine, who had a pretty
‘ young housekeeper, as his heir. But as my evil
‘ stars would have it, being once on a visit to him,
‘ and unthinkingly telling him a story of a ridiculous old dotard, and a brisk young damsel, he
‘ took the application to himself, called me an impertinent fellow, and discarded me.

‘ Many other misfortunes, Mr. Griffin, have attended this unlucky disposition of mine. They
‘ have had indeed, at last this good effect on me;
‘ they have brought me to my senses; and I begin to see, that had I possessed only wit enough
‘ to discover I was a fool, I should have acted very
‘ differently in these cases, and have been now a
‘ happy man.”

‘ I am, Sir, yours, &c.

‘ CHRISTOPHER CUTJOKE.

For the insertion of the following letter I shall make no apology, but its own merit, and leave it to speak for itself.

‘ To

‘ TO GREGORY GRIFFIN, ESQ.

‘ DEAR SIR,

‘ AS the professed intention
 ‘ of your admirable work, is to treat of the foibles
 ‘ and follies of mankind in general, and our little
 ‘ world in particular, I presume, that (however
 ‘ other pursuits may have induced you to depart
 ‘ from your original plan) the following unfi-
 ‘ nished lines, on a subject which you have not yet
 ‘ taken in hand, will not be totally unacceptable.

‘ I shall omit troubling you with the hackneyed
 ‘ apology of “ an unfledged muse,” however
 ‘ a propos it may be to the present case. This
 ‘ however I may be allowed to say, that they
 ‘ were written carelessly and in a hurry; and may
 ‘ possibly stand in need of much correction and de-
 ‘ falcation. If however on any future occasion
 ‘ they shall be deemed worthy of a place in your
 ‘ paper, it will be the highest honour that can be
 ‘ aspired to, by, your constant reader and admirer,

‘ IRONICULUS.

‘ A R S

' ARS MENTIENDI;

' O R,

' The ART of LYING.

- ' When fordid man by justice unrestrain'd
' Rang'd the wild woods, and food by plunder
' gain'd ;
' Yet unenlighten'd by mild reason's ray
' Coarse nature rul'd with undisputed sway.
' But when some sage's great aspiring mind,
' By bonds of mutual interest link'd mankind,
' Then Art restrain'd her sister's wide domain,
' And claim'd with nature, a divided reign.
' Yet still distrustful of her own success,
' She fought to please by wearing nature's dress.
' So *that* great art, whose principles and use,
' Employ the pen of my unworthy muse,
' Tho' great itself, in these degenerate days
' Is forced to shine with adscititious rays,
' Nor ever can a lasting sceptre wield,
' Unless in robes of purest truth conceal'd.
' Hear then whoe'er the arduous task will try,
' Who wish with sense, with skill, with taste to *lye*;
' Ye patriots plotting ministers disgrace,
' Ye ministers who fear — a loss of place ;
' Ye tradesmen, who with writs the fop entrap,
' Ye fops, who strive those tradesmen to escape ;
' Ye

‘ Ye reverend Jews, enrich’d by christian spoil,
‘ Ye parsons, who for benefices toil;
‘ No longer hope by open war to win,
‘ Cease, cease, ye fools, to lye “*thro’ thick and thin.*”
‘ But know this truth, enough for rogues to know,”
‘ Lyes ne’er can please the man who thinks them
‘ so.


‘ Would you by flattery seek the road to wealth?
‘ Push not too hard, but slide it in by stealth.
‘ Mark well your cully’s temper and pursuit
‘ And fit to every leg the pliant boot.
‘ Tell not the spendthrift that he hoards with sense,
‘ Tell not the miser that he scorns expence.
‘ Nor praise the learning of a dunce profess,
‘ Nor swear a sloven’s elegantly drest.
‘ Thus, if by chance, in harmless sport and play,
‘ You coolly talk a character away;
‘ Or boldly a flat perjurer appear,
‘ Nor gallows dread, nor lacerated ear,
‘ Still let your lyes to truth *near neighbours* be,
‘ And still with probability agree.
‘ So shall you govern with unbounded reign,
‘ Nor longer cringe, and toil, and lye in vain;
‘ While Truth laments her empire quite o’erthrown,
‘ And by a form usurp’d so like her *own.*’

THE
MICROCOSM.

No. XVI.—MONDAY, March 5, 1787.

————— *Ufus*
Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.

Use is the judge, the law, and rule of speech.

T is a favourite amusement with me, and one of which in the present paper I shall invite my readers to participate, to adopt a maxim established in any single instance, to trace its influence where it has operated undiscovered; to examine the secret springs by which it has worked; and the causes which have contributed to their concealment. In the course of this pursuit, I may boast, that there is scarce one of these *miniatures* of experience and observation, from the moral maxims of Grecian Philosophy,
to

to the prudential apothegms of *Poor Robin*, which has not been successively the object of my observation and discussion. I am however aware, that in the opinion of their importance, I may perhaps be singular.

That "life is short," that "the generality of mankind are vicious," seem ideas that might have suggested themselves to a mind undistinguished for peculiar sagacity, or an uncommon share of experience.—But to carry further the former of these maxims, and to consider that life is short, when compared with the multiplicity of its business, and the variety of its pursuits; that it is too much so for the purposes of honor and ambition; that to draw a conclusion from the attempts of men, we should imagine it longer; is an observation not so entirely unworthy of a philosopher. And by pursuing the latter of these thoughts, though on the first view it may not appear the result of any extraordinary observation, it may be found on a narrower inspection, to convey a strong argument of the impropriety of popular government.

The scrap of Latin, which, in conformity to established precedent, is prefixed to my paper, exhibits an example of the influence of Fashion beyond those limits, which are usually assigned to its prerogative. For were we to accept the definition of it, the most usually accepted, we should consider it only as the director of diversion and dress; of unmeaning compliment, and unsocial intimacy. And however evidently mistaken such an opinion might appear, we must look for its source in one of the most prevailing principles of the human mind; a principle, (the excess of which we stigmatize by the name of Pedantry) of deducing the illustrations of every subject of enquiry from the more immediate objects of our own pursuits, and circumscribing its bounds within the limits of our own observation. On the contrary, we shall find, that all our attempts to prescribe bounds to the activity of this so powerful agent, will end only in surprise at the extent of its authority; in astonishment at the universality of its influence. Its claim to an undisputed empire over language, is asserted by the author from whom I have taken the motto of this paper; with what justice, the testimony of a succeeding age may declare; when a Cæsar who made and unmade the laws

laws of the world at his pleasure, found the smallest innovation in language beyond the utmost limits of arbitrary power. Nothing indeed but the highest vanity, nourished by the grossest adulation, an idea of the infinitude of sovereign authority, and servile obedience, could have given birth to such an attempt.

However paradoxical it may seem, that, in a matter of judgment and taste, the vague arbitration of individuals should be preferable to the absolute decision of a learned body; yet the imbecility so evident in the language of a neighbouring nation, and so undoubtedly the effect of establishing such a court of criticism, leaves us little reason to regret, that language with us, is so entirely the child of chance and custom.—The first prize of Rhetorick given to a woman, was a bad omen to the future endeavours of the French Academy.

To omit the innumerable inconveniencies attending on every attempt to regulate language; to judge of the possible success of such an attempt, from the abstracted probability alone, were to declare it impossible. A multitude of

circumstances, equally unforeseen and unavoidable, must concur to the formation of a language. An improvement, or corruption of manners; the reduction of a foreign enemy; or an invasion from abroad, are circumstances that ultimately, or immediately, tend to produce some change in the language of a people. And even of these, the most feeble agents have been found more efficacious, than the joint operations of power and policy.

The conquests of this nation on the continent, contributed more perhaps to the naturalization of the French language amongst us, than the Norman invasion, and its attendant consequences, the necessity laid on every individual, to acquire the use of that tongue in which all cases of property were to be determined; and the numberless disadvantages and restrictions imposed on the study of the native language.

At a time when measures so seemingly decisive proved ineffectual, it may be curious to observe the agency of others, apparently foreign from any connection with the improvement or alteration of our language. The residence of our nobility

nobility in the conquered provinces of France, the continual wars maintained against that nation, making the study of their language an indispensable qualification in all who aspired to civil or military dignities, unavoidably brought on a change in our own. The accusation therefore, of a learned Etymologist, against *Chaucer*, of introducing into our language "*integra verborum*" "*plaustra*," "*whole cartloads of words*," however elegant in expression, is false in foundation. The language of *Chaucer's* poetry, is that of the court in which he lived; and that it was not, no probable conclusion can be drawn, from any difference of style in his authors, contemporaries. In those who writ under the same advantages, no such difference is observable; and those, who were excluded from them, laboured under extreme disadvantages, from the variations of vernacular language, and the diversity of provincial dialect; which, as they have now in a great measure ceased to exist, may, together with their primary causes, furnish a subject for curious enquiry.

It appears, from the concurrence of several ingenious antiquaries, as well as from the testi-

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mony of *Caxton*, in one of his prefaces, that the English language was, in his time, diversified by innumerable provincial peculiarities. He mentions his own choice of the Kentish dialect, and the success that attended it. The language of *Chaucer's* poetry is frequently more intelligible to a modern reader, than that of such of his successors, as employed themselves on popular subjects. *Gawin Douglas*, a poetical translator of *Virgil*, is now, owing to the use of a Northern dialect, though a near contemporary of *Spenser's*, almost unintelligible.

After establishing the existence of a fact, the beaten track of transition will naturally lead us to a consideration of its causes. Among the first effects produced by an extension of empire, may be reckoned a barbarous peculiarity of language, in the provinces the most remote from the seat of learning and refinement. *Livy* is said to have had his *Patavinity*; and *Claudian* is accused of barbarisms, the consequence of his education in a distant province. A difficulty of conveyance, a stagnation of commercial intercourse, will produce the same effects
with.

with too wide an extension of empire ; and are as an effectual a barrier against a mixture of Idioms and dialect, as in a more civilized state, the utmost distance of situation between the most remote provinces.

To causes seemingly so unconnected with the situation of language, must we attribute the barbarity of our own, during so many centuries. And those which contributed to its refinement, may, at first sight, probably, seem equally foreign to that effect. No nation, perhaps, contributed less to the revival of literature, than our own ; a circumstance which in a great measure secured it from that torrent of pedantry which overwhelmed the rest of Europe. The ignorance of our ancestors kept them unacquainted with the ancients ; except through the medium of a French translation. The first labours of the English press brought to light the productions of English literature ; which, how rude and barbarous soever, were not confined to the intelligence of the scholar, or the libraries of the learned ; but dispersed throughout the nation, and open to the inspection of all, disseminated a general taste for

literature, and gave a flow, gradual polish to our language:—while in every other nation of Europe, the conceits of commentators, and writers of a similar stamp, whose highest ambition it was to add a Latin termination to a High Dutch name, came into the world, covered with ill sorted fhreds of *Cicero* and *Virgil*; like the evil spirits, which have been said to animate a cast-off carcase, previous to their ascension to the regions of light.

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THE
MICROCOSM.

No. XVII.—MONDAY, March 12, 1787.

— *Diversa Sequentes.* — HOR.

Various their subjects.

‘ TO GREGORY GRIFFIN, ESQ.

‘ SIR,

‘ Have thrown together a few observa-
‘ tions on the true purpose and extent
‘ of politeness, a subject not altogether
‘ uninteresting; as it is in the proper
‘ or improper application of this, that we are to
‘ look for the real elegancies and heitenings of
‘ polished life; or the false and empty professions
‘ of hypocrisy. And first, it may not be amiss to
observe,

‘ observe, that though it can by no means be
‘ deemed in itself a sufficient substitute for real
‘ merit, yet it never fails to give it a polish where-
‘ ever it meets with it. By softening down the
‘ more prominent features, and as it were malle-
‘ ating the harder and more unyielding parts of
‘ the composition, it renders the object at once
‘ amiable and respectable. We may call it the
‘ Handmaid of Benevolence, busied at the same
‘ time in adding to the native charms of her
‘ mistress, and performing farther such little of-
‘ fices, as seem not to come immediately within
‘ her own department. Not contented; however,
‘ with this station, she has usurped a higher cha-
‘ racter, and like the shade of departed Sin-
‘ cerity, increases on us, and swells on the eye
‘ with that extraordinary expansion, which we
‘ are told the spiritual nature is capable of.

‘ She addresses us in borrowed phrase, and with
‘ complacent smiles, and seemingly honest wel-
‘ come, beckons us to the hollow embraces of a
‘ visionary impostor. Nor is such an impostor to
‘ be despised; as a weak or an impotent enemy.
‘ Like other counterfeits, she becomes the imme-
‘ diate tool of the worldly-minded, who find her a
‘ ready

‘ ready instrument for the execution of their mer-
‘ cenary views; and even the best are found upon
‘ some occasions to prostitute her to the most un-
‘ worthy purposes. Let me not, however, from
‘ this be deemed an enemy to polished manners.—
‘ As far as the adjusting ceremonials which fashion
‘ has prescribed, and which cannot but be in-
‘ nocent, because we seem in this case to enter
‘ into a sort of tacit compact of mutual deceit;
‘ still let them be the passport of a gentleman, and
‘ the stamp of civilization.

‘ But here let Politeness stop; let her not assume
‘ the form and accent of Philanthropy; let her not
‘ smile upon her follower,—then turn from him
‘ “with hard unkindness’ altered eye.” In this we
‘ trace a blacker motive; it is not the effect of a
‘ disposition curious in the observance of the mi-
‘ nuter parts of ceremonial, but the deliberate cru-
‘ elty of a reflecting mind.

‘ Many indeed are the ill consequences arising
‘ from the misapplication of politeness; in one
‘ it introduces an effeminacy and unmanliness of
‘ character; another accustoming himself to var-
‘ nish over things in their nature ambiguous, in-
‘ sensibly

‘ sensibly finds his perceptions of right and wrong
‘ become less clear and distinct; the invariable
‘ lines of truth and reason are confounded; and
‘ the moral sense itself becomes languid and inactive. It is true, that all who offend thus, err
‘ not from the the same motive; and it is not unfrequently from an affectation of rising higher
‘ than the highest, and of making improvements
‘ in an art already as perfect as it ought to be,
‘ that this has so far exceeded its natural limits:
‘ If so, it may not be amiss to observe, that as in
‘ all other languages, so in the courteous vocabulary, there is a period, after which all innovation
‘ becomes barbarous; and as in the former case
‘ the author who can add nothing to his original
‘ stock of materials, may, however, by a judicious
‘ arrangement give them all the graces of elocution; so may our Chesterfield Graduate display to us the fine gentleman with all its heightenings, without exceeding the limits which both
‘ fashion has prescribed, and worldly sincerity
‘ may allow of.

‘ I am, Sir, your’s, &c.

‘ To

‘TO GREGORY GRIFFIN, ESQ.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘As you have in a foregoing
‘paper so generously promised to attend impar-
‘tially to every complaint which shall be sub-
‘mitted to your cognizance, I think no one can
‘lay a juster claim to your attention, and even
‘compassion, than myself.—My whole life has
‘been one continued series of misfortunes.

‘I will not enter into a detail of my pedigree,
‘as that is both immaterial and uninteresting; suf-
‘fice it to say, I am the only Son of a Clergyman;
‘who being disgusted with some slights he had
‘received in the world, retired to a small living in
‘the North of England; with the determination
‘of devoting his whole time, to the care of my
‘education, which he was in every respect calcu-
‘lated to superintend. At the age of eighteen I
‘had the good fortune to obtain a Scholarship at
‘the University, and then the good old man, as if
‘he had compleated all his worldly affairs, resigned
‘himself into the hands of his maker; leaving me
‘no other inheritance than his benediction.—As I
‘had been strictly educated in the principles of ho-
‘nour

‘ nour and religion, I could not, I confess, behold
‘ the vice and folly of my fellow students, without
‘ endeavouring to point out to them the impropri-
‘ ety and depravity of their conduct; for my good
‘ nature however I was ridiculed; for my strict
‘ adherence to virtue I obtained the appellation of
‘ a *Prig*; and in short was universally laughed at
‘ and insulted.

‘ For the space of twenty years I led this life of
‘ misery; ’till at length urged on by the perpe-
‘ tual indignities I received, and quite weary of a
‘ College life, I gladly accepted the offer of a
‘ gentleman to become tutor to his sons; and thus
‘ gave up my wretched liberty for a still more
‘ wretched dependance. I flattered myself, indeed,
‘ that I had bettered my situation; but alas! into
‘ what an error had I fallen! I soon perceived, that
‘ Mr. B. was a professed libertine, and his lady a
‘ female rake. I consoled myself, however, with the
‘ thoughts of passing my time agreeably in the
‘ care of my young pupils; but here I was again
‘ mistaken.—They were four in number, all alike
‘ ungovernable, uncontrollable.—I strove at first
‘ to gain their affections by lenity and mildness;
‘ but I strove in vain. I then began to enforce
‘ harsher

‘harsher methods, and even to inflict chastisement;
‘but I was soon given to understand, that Mr. B.
‘did not permit *his* sons to be used like *common*
‘boys. Thus, Sir, I lost all authority over my
‘pupils; who now offer me every insult and in-
‘dignity, that their malice or revenge can suggest;
‘and take every opportunity of shewing their con-
‘tempt and superiority over me.—All this, Sir, I
‘could bear; as I am conscious of my own up-
‘rightness and integrity; but there is another
‘circumstance which raises my indignation to the
‘highest pitch. Mr. B. sometimes compels me
‘to be present at his excesses; alledging with a
‘sneer, that his chaplain certainly is the properest
‘man to say grace at his table. There, Sir, I am
‘not only a spectator of the most infamous and in-
‘decent behaviour, but am frequently compelled
‘to hear even the most daring and impious blas-
‘phemies; which raise at the same time my horror
‘and indignation. This, Mr. Griffin, is what I
‘cannot bear, and am determined to quit this
‘house immediately; if, therefore, you should be
‘able to procure me any place, agreeable to my
‘profession, as no doubt your interest in both
‘worlds is great, you will confer a real favour on,
‘Your sincere admirer,
‘ARTHUR CASSOCK.’

‘ TO GREGORY GRIFFIN, ESQ.
‘ SIR,

‘ IF the sincerity of the following verses can recommend them to your notice, and the tediousness of them be not foreign to your plan; I shall be much pleased to see them in a paper of the MICROCOSM.

‘ Your’s, Sir,

‘ ETONENSIS.’

‘ Ask ye, companions of my infant years,
‘ Why rise my sighs, why flow my frequent tears?
‘ Ah! know, e’re Cynthia shall her orb compleat,
‘ I leave, unhappy youth, fair Learning’s seat :
‘ I leave, dear Eton, thy maternal arms,
‘ These hallow’d walls, the muses much lov’d
‘ charms,
‘ To brave the storms, ah! many a storm I ween,
‘ That hover round life’s sad and gloomy scene,
‘ But e’re I go, accept these artless lays,
‘ That flow sincere, nor ask a poet’s praise;
‘ If they my boundless gratitude will speak,
‘ No more I ask, no greater need I seek.
‘ Sadly I go—the truth my tears will tell—
‘ Sadly, dear Eton, take a long farewell;
‘ For dawning reason warns, that leaving you,
‘ To peace, to innocence, I bid adieu :

‘ Yes,

‘ Yes, it is true, whate’er the world may say,
‘ Within your walls the moral virtues play;
‘ Infuse their power in ev’ry pupil’s breast,
‘ And give the features health, the conscience, rest.
‘ Oh! if thy precepts would forever live,
‘ Stamp’d on my breast, & their chaste influence give;
‘ Still should I virtue’s warning voice revere,
‘ Nor lend to Syren’s song a wanton ear.
‘ Amid the frantic mirth, the senseless noise,
‘ Which headstrong youth too oft mistakes for joys;
‘ My inmost thoughts I still would turn to thee,
‘ Call on thy name, and boast my reason free.
‘ Accept then, Eton, this my grateful pray’r,
‘ Long may’st thou flourish Phœbus’ fav’rite care;
‘ Long may’st thou rear on high, the ‘antique tow’r’,
‘ Secure from greedy time’s malicious pow’r.
‘ And thou, fair Thames, who view’st with con-
‘ scious pride,
‘ The jocund sports that skirt thy sedge side,
‘ Farewell! no more shall I thy banks along,
‘ Sooth’d by soft murmurs, pen my uncouth song;
‘ No more by warm ideas rapt, shall dream,
‘ Of gay poetic ground and sacred stream.
‘ To you, ye much lov’d trees, beneath whose shade,
‘ Thro’ classic walks, in musing mood I stray’d;
‘ I bid farewell, ’tis tyrant time commands,
‘ To seek new walks, and fields, in other lands;

- ‘ To other lands I go ; no more shall meet
‘ The well known face, no more the friend shall
‘ greet ;
‘ Yes, dear companions, I shall find but few,
‘ On life’s great stage, such candid friends as you.
‘ I go, compell’d your friendship to forsake ;—
‘ But O ! whatever parts in life you take,
‘ O ! in his part may each successful prove,
‘ And crown the wish of my fraternal love.
‘ But what return, what due return can song,
‘ Song weak as mine, give them to whom belong
‘ The little gleanings of my classic lore,
‘ And all my knowledge (were that knowledge
‘ more)
‘ Yet I will thank you, nor the thanks refuse,
‘ Ye kind *Instructors* of my lisping muse ;
‘ Accept the wishes of a grateful heart,
‘ That feels far more than language can impart.
‘ Whenever good shall mark my humble way,
‘ To you the merit and the thanks I’ll pay ;
‘ Where’er I go, your memories shall be dear,
‘ I’ll love your lessons, and your names revere.
‘ From pleasure’s paths unwillingly I stray,
‘ The summer past, then comes a winter’s day ;
‘ Sadly I go—the truth my tears will tell—
‘ Sadly, dear Eton, take a long farewell.’

THE

M I C R O C O S M.

No. XVIII. MONDAY, *March 12, 1787.*

Fruitur famâ sui.——TACITUS.

*He becomes a witness of the opinions which
others entertain of him.*



‘MERCURY,’ says the fabulist, ‘wishing to know in what estimation he was held by mankind, put off the insignia of divinity, and assuming the air and appearance of a mere mortal, entered into the shop of a statuary. Having purchased, at a considerable price, a Jupiter, a Juno, a Fury or two, and some other nick-nacks of the same kind “And what,” said he, pointing to a statue of

of himself, which stood on graceful tiptoe in the window, "what may be the price of that elegant image?" "Sir," replied the artist, "you have proved so good a customer to me, for some of my best pieces, that I shall but do you justice, if I throw you that paltry figure into the bargain."

Prevalent as every species of curiosity is among mankind, there is none which has so powerful an influence over every man, as this desire of knowing what the world may think of him. There is none, the gratification of which is so eagerly desired, or, in general, so heartily repented of.

A man in his absence will undoubtedly be spoken of with more freedom than when present. His faults will be more openly pointed out; his vices more strongly censured; his whole character will undergo a stricter examination, and will be scrutinized with less reserve, and more impartiality. Censure will not be restrained by the fear of giving offence; nor praise allured, by the hopes of conciliating affection.

Should he therefore take advantage of his supposed absence, to discover the true opinions of others

others with regard to himself, he will run no little risque of hearing disagreeable truths ; which at the same time that they inform him of foibles in himself, against which he had hitherto shut his eyes, seldom or never fail to estrange his esteem from those, to whom he is indebted for the information.

Advice, however earnestly sought, however ardently solicited, if it does not coincide with a man's own opinions, if it tends only to investigate the improprieties, to correct the criminal excesses of his conduct ; to dissuade from a continuance, and to recommend a reformation of his errors ; seldom answers any other purpose than to put him out of humour with himself, and to alienate his affections from the adviser. If then, censure, even when thus courted under the name of kindness, is so destructive to all friendship, how much more so must it be, when being bestowed unasked and unavowed, its intention seems not so much to caution, as to criminate ; to reform, as to condemn. For in this light must all strictures, past on an absent person, appear to himself ; when, instead of the candour of open advice, the warnings of friendly admonition, he fancies that he dis-

cover

covers the meanness of secret calumny, the malice of deliberate detraction.

It cannot then but be evident to every man how dangerous an experiment it is, thus artfully to search out the opinion others may entertain of him; which, when discovered, is generally the cause of not a little mortification; and makes an impression on the mind, hardly ever to be effaced, by subsequent professions of esteem, or even a series of disinterested services. An impression, which is deepened by a sense of the treachery of those, who took advantage of his absence to canvass his faults; and by a remembrance of the dishonest artifice by which he obtained a knowledge of their opinions.

And if it be thus necessary for every man to be cautious of prying into the opinions of others, with regard to himself, it is no less necessary that he should beware, before whom, or what persons he delivers his own opinion. An unlucky censure, an unintentional sarcasm, has sometimes checked the progress of intimacy, has loosened the bonds of friendship, and has branded the unwary author of it with the title of a cynic, or a slan-

derer. I remember an instance of this kind, which though not very serious in its consequences, must nevertheless have been extremely distressing. —A Gentleman in a crowded theatre, turned suddenly round to a stranger who sat beside him, and enquired hastily ‘what *ugly hag* was that coming into an opposite box?’—The stranger, with a low bow of acknowledgement, replied, that it was his *sister*.’ The gentleman, confounded and ashamed made an eager but awkward endeavour to exculpate himself; and as errors, like misfortunes, seldom come singly,—‘Pardon me, Sir,’ cried he, ‘it was not that *good looking young lady*, I meant to point out to you, but that *deformed witch*, that sits next to her.’—The stranger repeated his obeisance, and ‘*that*, Sir,’ said he, ‘is my *wife*.’ There is not perhaps another situation so distressing as one of this kind; where an unhappy mortal, having, by a casual inadvertency, made one false step, which he is unable to retrieve, becomes conscious of his mistake; and unwilling to go forward, yet not knowing how to recede, confused in apologies, and entangled in excuses, seeking in vain for some clue of explanation, wanders through a maze of error, and is lost in a labyrinth of perplexity.

But it is not my intention to weary my readers, through the whole of this paper, with prudential cautions, and dogmas on discretion. I shall at present consider my subject only as it relates to myself. ‘*Scribam ipse de me.*’ ‘I will become ‘my own historian,’ says *Cicero*, in that extraordinary specimen of unbounded vanity, his letter to *Luceius*; ‘*multorum tamen exemplo, et clarorum virorum,*’ ‘in imitation however of many and ‘illustrious men.’—To become ‘their own ‘historians’ has been the constant practice of all my illustrious predecessors; none of whom have omitted, in some part of their works, to descant on the importance and usefulness of their undertaking; to display the unavoidable inconveniences, or boast of the peculiar advantages, incident to their situation.

Availing myself of these precedents, I may be allowed to boast, that there is no one who enjoys so many favourable opportunities of gratifying the curiosity, which I have made the subject of this paper, of discovering the real opinion my readers entertain of myself and my lucubrations. Personally unknown, even to my fellow-citizens, as *Gregory Griffin*, I am afforded considerable entertainment

tainment by becoming an auditor of their criticisms on the work, and a confidant of their conjectures on the Author. Many a time have I heard in silence my own accusation; have joined in a general sneer, or even affected to participate in a hearty laugh at my own expence. And as often, to the great pain of my natural modesty, have I tacitly assented to the praise, or even loudly concurred in the commendations of my own performances. In trials of the former kind, I own I have sometimes found it difficult to restrain the feelings of an author; and have been ready to give vent to my indignation, when I have seen my labours degraded to the most menial employments, and insultingly placed under a pound of butter, or wrapped round the handle of a tea kettle. At other times I have been sinking with shame, and confounded with gratitude, when I have chanced to meet with gentlemen, who have been so good, as to clear me of all my faults, by kindly taking them on themselves; and candidly confessing, that they *did* send me this or that paper, and *did* give me permission to publish it, without acknowledging my obligations. To these gentlemen I am proud of an opportunity to return my thanks for the honour they confer on

me, and to assure them that all my papers are very much at their service; provided only, that they will be so kind as just to send me previous notice which they may think fit to own; that my bookseller may have proper directions, if called upon, to confirm their respective claims; and for the prevention of any error, which might otherwise arise, should two persons unfortunately make the same choice.

In the course of the discoveries which have been confidentially imparted to me, I have been not a little amused by the variety of positive proofs on which each has grounded his knowledge of the author. So confident indeed have been some assertions, that I have been much staggered in my belief, and almost inclined to doubt my own identity. About three weeks ago I was very seriously alarmed, by intelligence which I received of an illness under which I then laboured. My informer was certain of his fact, but enjoined me not to mention it again; he had, it seems, been let into the secret by a friend of his, who had been told of it by an acquaintance of his, who had had it from a near relation of his, who had been informed of it by an intimate of her's, who
had

had heard it from the best authority. Here, indeed, was the clearest conviction, and proofs, which amounted to a certainty; and I really began to be very uneasy about the Consequences of my indisposition, when I was happily relieved from my anxiety by another friend of mine, who, with like injunctions of secrecy, and equal positiveness of assertion, assured me that I was then very well, and had been seen in a Commoner's gown at one of the Universities.

But nothing has diverted me more than the various strictures passed on me by such as have wished either to correct me by counsel, or damp me by discouragement. In these I have been frequently amused by a fair arrangement of contradictory criticisms, and objections which obviate each other.—Awkward imitation—and affected originality; the ostentation of reading,—and the want of it, have been carped at with equal severity: Some have objected to the “*price-two-pence*,” and others to the “*præcox ingenium*,” some are offended by the arrogance of unnecessary egotism; and others sneer at the unimportance of anonymous obscurity.

As specimens of these opposite censures, I shall subjoin a few short letters, by which various well-meaning persons have, at different times, kindly attempted my reformation.

'SIR,

'From the promising exordium of your elegant work, I own, I expected to find much better amusement, and, let me add, instruction, than humorous caricaturas of the foibles and follies of your fellow-citizens; let me hope, Sir, you will no longer proceed on this plan, but will rise to subjects more worthy your genius and abilities.

'I am, Sir, yours,
'*Lincoln's-Inn, Nov. 25, 1786.* 'AMICUS.'

'MR. GRIFFIN,

'I thought you promised, in the beginning of your work, that you would confine it to your fellow-citizens; this you have not done. You will, perhaps, answer, that you have at least chosen such subjects, as would instruct and improve

‘ prove them. But that is not what I mean.
 ‘ In short, Sir, are we to have any Satire, or, are
 ‘ we not?

‘ Yours,

‘ *Eton, Feb. 19, 1787.*

‘ A FELLOW-CITIZEN.’

‘ SIR,

‘ I am extremely pleased with the whole of
 ‘ your admirable work. It is a praiseworthy at-
 ‘ tempt, and if it succeeds, which I cannot doubt,
 ‘ will reflect great honour on the place of your
 ‘ Education. I hope you will continue to in-
 ‘ tersperse it throughout with poetical pieces;
 ‘ I received much pleasure from those which I
 ‘ have already perused, and am certain every one
 ‘ who views your work through a medium of
 ‘ candour must do the same. I am, Sir,

‘ Your admirer,

‘ _____.’

‘ Mr. GREGORY,

‘ I like your work very well, upon the
 ‘ whole; very well indeed—but pray beware of

‘poetry—stick to prose and you may succeed—
 ‘but poetry, Sir, will never do.—Another thing,
 ‘Mr. G. I would advise you; to imitate *Mr. Addison*
 ‘more,—you can never copy too closely so
 ‘great an original.—Take my advice, Sir, and
 ‘believe me,

‘Your well-wisher,

‘CRITICUS.”

‘I write merely to warn you, Sir, that imi-
 ‘tation, carried too far, becomes plagiarism.
 ‘An *Addison*, Sir, may be imitated too far.
 ‘I hate e’en *Garrick* thus at second hand.”

‘Yours,

‘CENSOR.”

‘MY DEAR SIR,

‘I am particularly pleased with your equi-
 ‘table treatment of Correspondents; in paying
 ‘so strict an attention to their communications,
 ‘and yet not making that a plea for inactivity,
 ‘or a remission of your weekly labours. That
 ‘you

‘ you may long continue to enjoy the reputation
‘ you so justly merit, is the sincere wish of, Sir,

‘ Your Admirer,

‘ *London, March 1, 1787.*

E. P.

‘ As long as you gave one number a week,
‘ Mr. Griffin, it was all very well, and I took two
‘ of each,—but now you give two every week;
‘ and tho’ you pretend to do it out of justice to
‘ correspondents, let me tell you, Sir, it has a
‘ very mercenary appearance,—and so long as this
‘ continues, I shall only take one of each—so
‘ you’ll get nothing by it,

‘ From your humble Servant,

‘ ANAS!’

‘ SIR,

‘ In a literary performance by a juvenile
‘ author, I feared to find intermixed much of
‘ the common trash of periodical papers; stories
‘ of love-adventures “*founded on facts*,” luckless
‘ pairs, happy marriages, and jumbles of jealousy
‘ and sentimental affection;—I am, Sir, happily
‘ disappointed,—and hope you will continue,

L 5

‘ without

‘ without any mixture of stuff about love, which
‘ young men ought to know nothing of, thus to
‘ amuse,

‘ Your constant Reader,

‘ GERTRUDE GRUM.’

‘ MR. GRIFFIN, SIR,

‘ This comes to let you know, that tho’ I
‘ can’t write nor read, our Peter writes this for
‘ me, and I hear all your papers read in our
‘ kitchen. I don’t understand none of them, not
‘ I; but I see there’s nothing at all about love,
‘ or about maid-servants making their fortunes
‘ by marriage. O! Mr. Griffin, if you be he,
‘ they says you be, you know the person that I
‘ love best. He is to be sure the prettiest behaved,
‘ sweetest young gentleman, and his name begins
‘ with a—no, but I wont tell you what his name
‘ begins with neither,—but could not you just
‘ give him a hint about his loving humble servant,
‘ as he calls me,

‘ MARITORNES.’

‘ P. S. Peter can read, and write, and cipher too.

I have taken some liberties with my last correspondent, in adjusting the orthography of her letter, so as to adapt it to common comprehension; if there is any other alteration, she must look for its cause in the P. S. where *Peter* (totally, I believe, with a view to his own aggrandizement, and without the privity and consent of his fair employer) declares his skill in *cyphering*, which he has practised with such success as to render the decyphering a matter of no small difficulty.

I shall not add any comment to the preceding letters, but leave them, like the *Gravitation* and *Centrifugal force*, which Philosophers talk of, to counteract each other's tendency; and conclude my paper, as I began it, with a tale; which though perhaps it may be very old, enjoys a double advantage, which tales seldom do, of being extremely short, and extremely *apropos*.

A Painter of great skill and eminence, who wished to have his work as free from blemishes, and as correctly beautiful as a picture could be made, hung it up one morning in the public market-place, with a request that every one
would

would take the trouble to mark what he thought the faulty part of the performance. Coming in the evening to carry home his picture, he was surpris'd and mortified to find every part of it covered with faults. Not a muscle of the body, or a feature of the face, but bore some sign of disapprobation. Resolving, however, to see whether his piece was entirely destitute of beauties, he hung it up next morning in the same place, desiring, that every one would be so kind as to set some mark on what he thought the excellencies of the picture. Coming as before in the evening to carry it away, it was not a little consolation to him, to find those very parts, that had before exhibited the strongest signs of dislike, now marked with the utmost encomium; to find, that if he had before had reason to lament having excited universal disgust, he might now be proportionably proud of having conciliated universal admiration.

B.

THE MICROCOSM.

No. XIX.—MONDAY, *March 19, 1787.*

Οἶον δὲ τρέφει ἔρνος ἀνὴρ ἐριθιγὴς ἐλαίης
 Χώρῳ ἐν οἰοπόλῳ, ὅθ' ἄλῃς ἀναβέβρυχεν ὕδωρ,
 Καλὸν, τηλεθάου, τὸ δέ τε πνοιαὶ δονέσσι
 Παντοίων ἀνέμων, καὶ τε βρύει ἄνθει λευκῷ.
 Ἐλθὼν δ' ἐξαπίνης ἄνεμος, σὺν λαίλαπι πολλῇ,
 Βόθρῳ τ' ἐξέσρεψε, καὶ ἐξετάυνυσσ' ἐπὶ γαίῃ.

HOM. IL.

*As the young olive in some sylvan scene,
 Crown'd by fresh fountains with eternal green,
 Lifts the gay head, in snowy flowrets fair,
 And plays and dances to the gentle air;
 When lo! a whirlwind from high heav'n invades
 The tender plant, and withers all its shades;
 It lies uprooted in its genial bed,
 A lovely ruin, now defac'd and dead. ——— POPE.*



THIS is an observation founded on a general survey of mankind, and which I am afraid a closer inspection would not controvert, that one half of the world knows not how the other exists.

This

This however might in part be attributed to the insufficiency of human nature; were it not a melancholy truth, that their negligence in this point is equal to their ignorance. Nursed in the lap of luxury, the son of fortune, whose budding hopes have never been nipped by the blast of adversity, turns his eyes with contemptuous disgust from the cheerless scenes of penury and distress, to the dazzling glare, which, under pretence of lulling sorrow, stares reflection out of countenance, and convicts reason of Cynicism by the specious appearance of indulging harmless gaiety. The listless Apathist, becalmed in his own insensibility, looks with a vacant eye on the terrors of conflicting passion; or as the utmost exertion of his pity, endeavours to allay the storm of a weak but generous mind, with the dictatorial precepts of a closeted philosopher.

Those of the above description I warn to proceed no farther in this paper. To the feeling, and in this community I should hope the major part of my readers, the authenticity of the following story will carry with it a sufficient apology.

The

The father of Frederic having from an early pique secluded himself from mankind, devoted an ample fortune to his family, his stables, and his cellar, in the extremity of Somersetshire. He was naturally of a morose, saturnine temper, which a considerable quantity of port, regularly discussed after dinner for a continuance of thirty years, had not a little contributed to heighten. The usual companion of his leisure hours was the Parish Attorney, a supple knave, who, as occasion served, could rail at the times, praise the wine, take snuff, or ring for *t'other bottle*. Argument, it is natural to suppose, would not have beguiled many hours with such a duumvirate; but the 'Squire was too distrustful of any thing human to be circumvented in the common way; and his Achates too much a Master of Arts to attempt it.

By a feint therefore at first of opposition, and at every convenient opportunity of conviction, he frequently flattered this petty tyrant more agreeably, and sometimes allured him to his own opinion. The subject of his eldest son's education was long on the tapis; the 'Squire being too much of a misanthrope to relish the idea of a public school, and the Lawyer too jealous of the boy's growing in

influence, not to wish so powerful an obstacle removed. At length however by a more than usual exertion of artifice, he wheedled the old Gentleman out of his prejudices, and at ten years of age, Frederic was sent to Eton. Even at this early period the natural warmth of his disposition had begun to display itself. Open, candid, and generous, his heart was the constant companion of his hand, and his tongue the artless index of his mind. As his ideas expanded, his virtues seemed to have acquired a larger scope; and the unsuspecting generosity which had before induced him heedlessly to deposit his joys and griefs with every stranger, to have been matured into a warm philanthropic benevolence for human nature, and a romantic attachment to the few who were the more immediate objects of his affections. Exposed alike to the attacks of all the generous passions, the impetuous sallies of his temper were as easily suppressed as excited. Jealous in the extreme of obligations, and keenly sensitive in any point which appealed to his honour or compassion, he was always a stranger to the calm serenity of a virtuous mind; and ultimately overwhelm'd by those feelings which are so often the pleasing curse of a luxuriant imagination.

To

To these qualifications of the heart, Frederic added the endowments of an elegant fancy ; often indeed too impatient of the necessary restrictions of art, but naturally corrected by so pure a taste, as to enable him to discern, with admirable perspicuity, the limits of true and false beauty ; and those of his classical compositions which peculiarly struck his ideas, united that vivid, energetic glow of thought, which true genius alone can conceive, to a simple chastity of expression which only correct judgment can define. As an agreeable polish to so much intrinsic merit, his countenance was lively and animated, his figure genteel, and his manners engaging.

In human as in inanimate nature, similar qualities will have a mutual attraction. By directing our thoughts to the same objects ; by viewing each other's ideas with a sympathetic benevolence ; nay even by those friendly contests, which in the most perfect unanimity of opinion the digressive sallies of enthusiasm sometimes give rise to ; but which tend only to diversify the calm of universal concurrence, we insensibly glide into that intimate harmony, without which society is but a state of armed neutrality, little superior to the open warfare

fare of savage nature. By each of these ties was a Romantic friendship cemented between Frederic and Edmond; their sentiments and inclinations mutually led them to a tender regard for each other's virtues. And as they were equally blessed with all external contingencies towards happiness in future, they looked forward with satisfaction to the scene of active life, which seemed to invite them to the honourable exertion of their abilities.

But, alas! so fair a morning was overcast in its dawn. Frederic's virtues, which though they could not have prolonged his existence, might at least have entitled him to a calm resignation of his breath, and the sublime satisfaction of a tranquil mind in the awful moment of dissolution, were blasted by the artful insinuations of a villain. The worthy perpetrator of this precious piece of villainy, had, by magnifying puerile foibles into the premeditated depravities of a black heart, at length so estranged the affections of his father, as to prevail on him to make a will entirely in his own favour; and the first notice of his displeasure, was conveyed to Frederic by the Executor, some days after his death.

Melan-

Melancholy, to a soft and lively mind, is at first an unwelcome stranger; the propensity to indulge its sensations is strongly engrafted in our natures, and we feel our own weakness though we cannot overcome it. It was in vain that Frederic called to mind every consolatory precept which philosophy can so well suggest, but human nature so ill practice on these occasions; he began to lose his relish for society, and even to avoid the company of a friend, to whom he could now look on his attachment in no other light than as a burthen. The quick jealousy of Edmond did not let this alteration pass unobserved. He endeavoured, by an increased attention, to dispel the cloud he perceived lowering on his friend's spirits; but in vain. Resolved therefore by one effort, to request that confidence which his esteem taught him he was entitled to, he took the opportunity of communicating one day his observations, and complaining of that reserve which had before been a stranger to their intercourse. Frederic felt this reproach, and resolved to sacrifice his own feelings to those of his friend. "Edmond," said he, "hitherto we have lived together in the most uninterrupted union; that we might have died as we have lived was the fondest hope my imagination ever cherished;

“rished;—That hope is blasted.—Whatever may
“have dictated this letter, I am guiltless of having
“given the most trivial occasion for it.” Edmond
read the letter with that mixed emotion which a
good mind feels at the calamity of a friend, and
the prospect of relieving it. “My friend,” he re-
plied, “what delicacy would otherwise have pre-
“vented me from pressing, your candour has
“forced from me; need I tell you, that providence
“has furnished me with ample means for our
“mutual happiness; despise, while I have a
“hand to serve you, the frowns of fortune; and
“if that should fail, let us encounter poverty to-
“gether, and die as we have lived, *united*.” “No,
“Edmond, my pride forbids me to live a de-
“pendant even on your generosity; my misery
“shall never be a burthen to you. The wide
“world is before me; my life has not been so
“blackened with guilt, but I shall somewhere
“find an asylum, however wretched, to ex-
“change a miserable existence for a tranquil
“dissolution; may you run that race of glory
“which is denied to me; and may the recol-
“lection of your lost friend sometimes diffuse
“a pleasing melancholy over the moment of
“reflection; but never, never embitter that un-
“in-

“interrupted felicity which your virtues are so
“amply entitled to.” Edmond had scarce strength
to urge his request; ’till Frederic foreseeing that
the execution of his gloomy purpose might
be prevented by the jealous vigilance of his
friend, appeared by degrees to soften into com-
pliance, and relieved his present anxiety by a mo-
mentary affectation of tranquility. He was scarce
however retired to his chamber, when, having di-
rected a small note to Edmond, he threw himself
into a chaise, and arrived late in the evening in the
Metropolis. Regardless of the objects around
him, and solely enveloped in the contemplation of
the scene he had just quitted, he threw himself on
a bed in the Inn at which he alighted; and with
partial dozes, which only served to render his si-
tuation more horrible, he reflected on his miseries
’till morning. As soon as it was light, he deter-
mined to hire a lodging in some obscure part of
the town, where he might elude the prying gene-
rosity of his friend, and endeavour to protract a mi-
serable existence, which an enthusiastic sense of
religion alone prevented him from sacrificing to
his despair. For this purpose he fixed on a mi-
serable garret, in those gloomy regions, at sight
of which even adversity recoils; here, with the as-
sistance

sistence of a few books which he had brought with him for the purpose, he endeavoured to beguile that hollow misery which continually preyed on his vitals. And that no neglect of religious duty might embitter his reflections, determined to apply himself to some means of supporting life. Still therefore cherishing the idea of independence however wretched; he determined to enlist himself among a tribe of translators employed by an eminent bookseller; vainly hoping, that while he earned his miserable pittance, by a return of labour, the obligation would be considered as mutual. But he soon found that there is not so abject a slave as a hireling scribler, nor so tyrannical a despot, as an illiterate churl, who pays for learning and potatoes with the same remorseless stupidity. The imperious arrogance of this Bashaw, and the gross adulation, and vulgar merriment of his fellow servants, was little suited to the proud sensibility of Frederic. He endured however the insults of the one and jests of the others, 'till a fever, brought on by his continual agitation of spirits, actually deprived him of this means of earning a subsistence, and stretched him on his truckle bed amidst all the horrors of famine, indigence, disease, and despair.

In the mean time, Edmond, whose violent affliction for the departure of his friend, had for some time reduced his life to a precarious situation; as soon as he found his health in some degree reestablished, determined to abandon a spot which only presented to his mind a gloomy recollection of the days that were gone, and to follow the fortunes of his friend. Having accordingly laid the circumstances before his father, he obtained a full permission to gratify his inclination. He repaired to London, as supposing Frederic would abscond in some obscure spot of a labyrinth in which he was most likely to be effectually concealed.

After a fortnight's fruitless search, when a settled gloom had begun to throw a damp on all his hopes of success, happening one day to enter the shop of Frederic's late employer, he overheard the literary monarch enforcing his daily rebuke with sundry oaths and ejaculations; and among other particulars, bitterly complaining of the absence of the pale dismal young man, who had lately enlisted in his service. This description immediately figured to his imagination, his dejected friend;—tremblingly alive with this idea, he eagerly

eagerly enquired his lodging, determining immediately to satisfy the fearful curiosity which his late absence had inspired. His first emotions a little subsided, he resolved previously to apply for medical assistance; that in case of any urgent necessity, it might be at hand. For this purpose he visited the late Dr. ———, and it was by his advice, that he determined to spare his friend's weak and exhausted spirits the agitation of a sudden interview.

It was not without considerable emotion that Edmond entered a dreary hut, whose very appearance was calculated to inspire misery; it was from the hag who owned this mansion, that he learned, that her lodger had for some time kept his bed; and was so reduced, by three days almost total abstinence, as to be frequently deprived of understanding. Shocked as he was at this information, he saw the propriety of the Physician's advice sufficiently, to take his stand at the door of the apartment, in order to watch the most favourable opportunity for an interview.

Frederic's strength had been that evening so far exhausted by a preceding delirium as to afford him

him for a short time the wretched possession of his faculties. He was kneeling, with great apparent agony, before a bible, and grasping with a convulsive gripe the foot of his bed, as if by the exertion of his nerves, to awaken his fainting soul from the torpor which seemed to be gathering on it at every interval of impassioned phrenzy. There is in solitary misery, a comfortless horror in brooding over misfortunes, which far exceeds even the cutting pangs we feel when those we love are involved in our calamities. In the latter situation we have a pleasing object to rest the external sense on; and the very gratification of our feelings on such an occasion, diffuses a tranquil luxury over our sorrows; in the former, all is dark and comfortless, and a gnawing horror perpetually suggests ideas, which the gangrened imagination, while it trembles to nourish, is unable to resist the indulgence of. Such was the situation of Frederic, when the recollection of the past, the horror of the present, and the prospect of the future, drew from the bottom of his soul, "*Oh! that I had the wings of a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest.*" Edmond could at this ejaculation no longer contain himself, but rushing into the room, and hanging over his

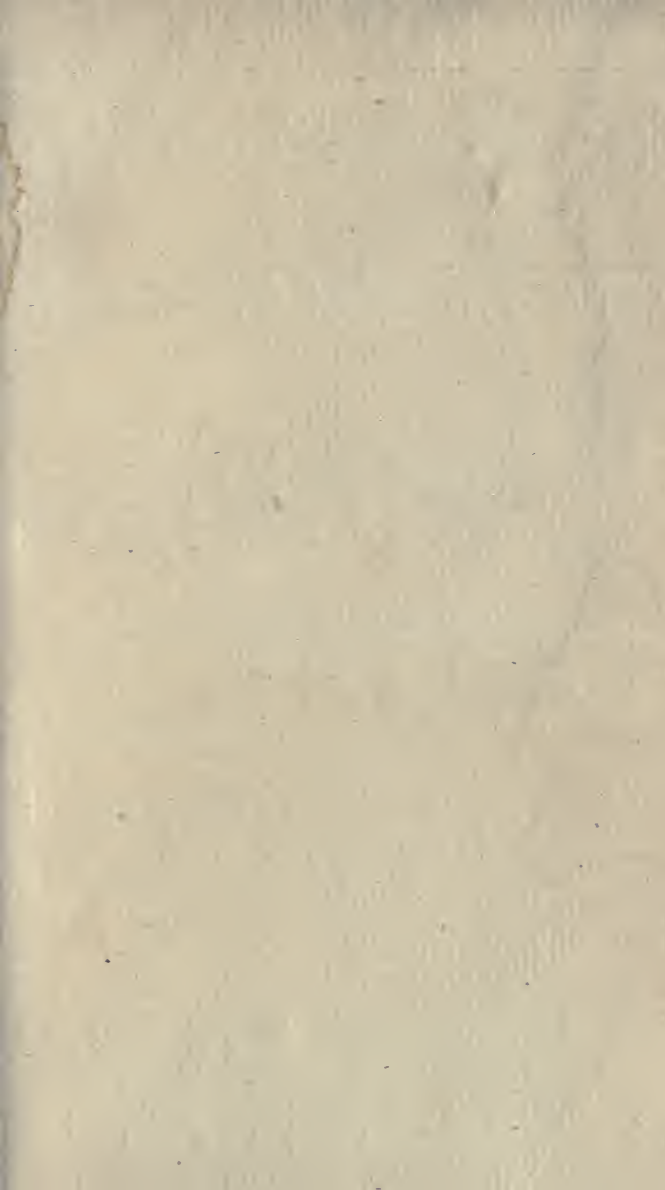
fainting friend, "All may yet be well," said he, "we may yet live to renew our pleasures; to pursue those fond projects which your too delicate generosity has so cruelly interrupted!" The well-known voice sounded on Frederic's dying senses, and recalled a momentary exertion of his languid spirit; "Never, never, it is past! Oh! Edmond, it is past!" then darting a look of despairing agony to Heaven, he exclaimed, in a trembling voice, "My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?" and sinking into the arms of his friend, groaned out his soul, and expired.

C

NOTES to CORRESPONDENTS.

TOGATUS must have entered very dully into the spirit of the Numbers he objects to; I shall exemplify my *power of rejection*, in the non-insertion of his Letter.--I shall be happy in the future correspondence of SIMON SNUBNOSE; at present I fear he glances too much on Politics for admission.

END OF VOL. I.



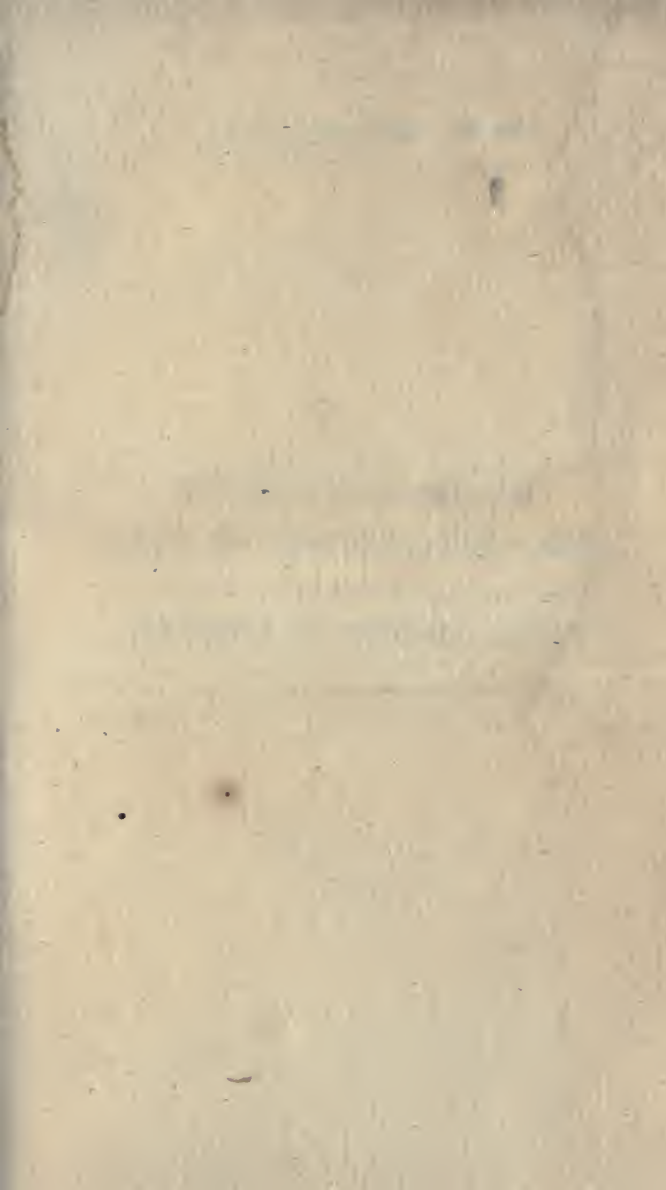
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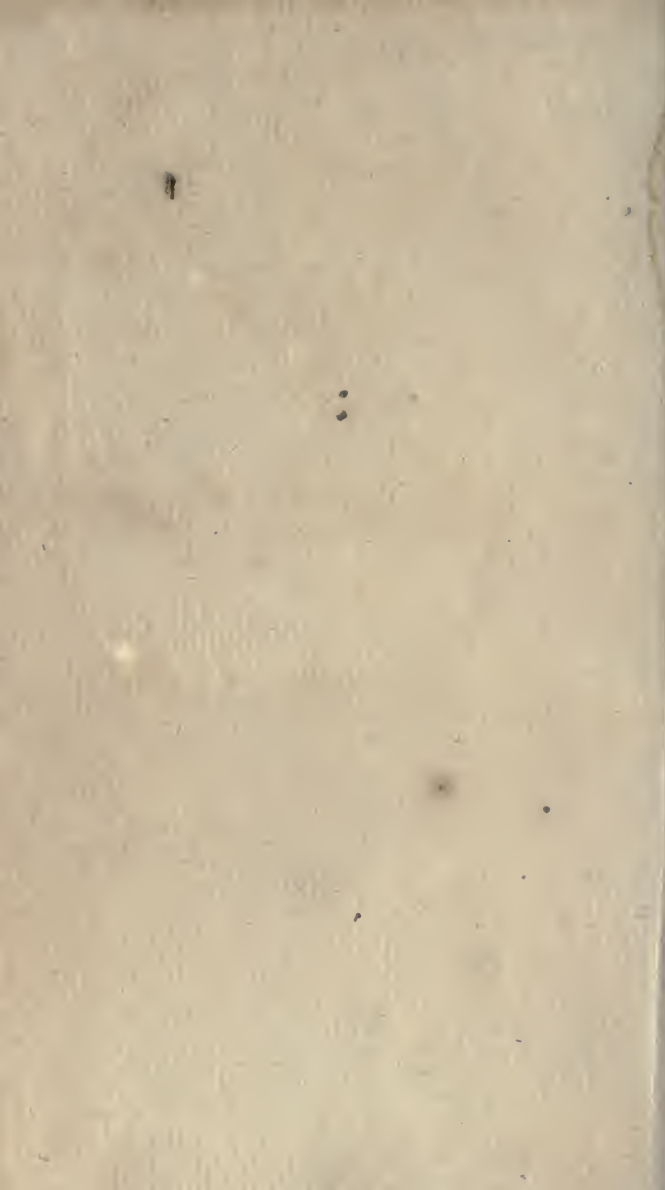
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